



COALITION FOR
COMPASSIONATE
SCHOOLS

Navigating the Path Toward Sustainable School
Communities: Cultivating Healing and
Capacity-Focused Systems through Student Voice,
SEL and Trauma-Informed Practices

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Waikiki, Hawaii

January 10, 2025

10:00 AM

Who We Are: May CforCS (and Play Cousins) be with YOU!



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Director of Programming



Welcome!

Your presence is a gift. Come in
and take an affirmation card and
read it to yourself.

Ask yourself:

What is this card offering me
here? What resonates?





COALITION FOR
COMPASSIONATE
SCHOOLS

Introduction to Coalition for Compassionate Schools (CforCS)





COALITION FOR
COMPASSIONATE
SCHOOLS

“CforCS is with you!”



SAMHSA Award #6H79SM085077-01M001 NCTSN Category 2 Center

DOJ BJA: Stop School Violence Award: 15PBJA-24-GG-04362-STOP

**OJJDP: Enhancing School Capacity to Address Youth Violence:
15PJDP-23-GK-04185-STOP**

What we do:

- **Bring Together Collective expertise:** the Coalition has been coming together consistently for over 8 years and includes a range of experts in mental, behavioral, and public health & education.
- **Coordinate Services with school partners:** Coalition members regularly partner/align services within schools, CMOs, and youth serving organizations to offer supportive services.
- **Create programs** focused on prevention, screening, and intervention: Trauma Informed Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Universal Behavioral Health Screening, professional development, Trauma Stewardship for Educators, Participatory Action Research.

Coalition for Compassionate Schools

Working through three interdependent components, our mission is to support transformative change in schools as they adopt, implement, and sustain culturally-responsive, trauma-informed, healing-centered approaches.

Collaboration and Coordination

Local Impact

- Longstanding, multi-agency collaborative transforming public education in NOLA.
- Recognized through the United Way of Southeast Louisiana Community Impact Service Partner Award.

National Impact

- Engagement in national discourse on trauma-informed schools via:
 - TREP Project (Univ. of Chicago).
 - National Center for School Mental Health.
 - National Summit for Trauma-Informed Schools.

Implementation Support

Local Impact

- Supported the implementation of trauma-informed approaches in 17 schools.
- Recognized through the FirstLine Community Schools Community Partner Award.

National Impact

- Awarded a \$500,000 DOJ-grant to develop a Train the Trainer model for trauma-informed schools.
- Disseminated trainings and tools in 4 states and to national Center networks.

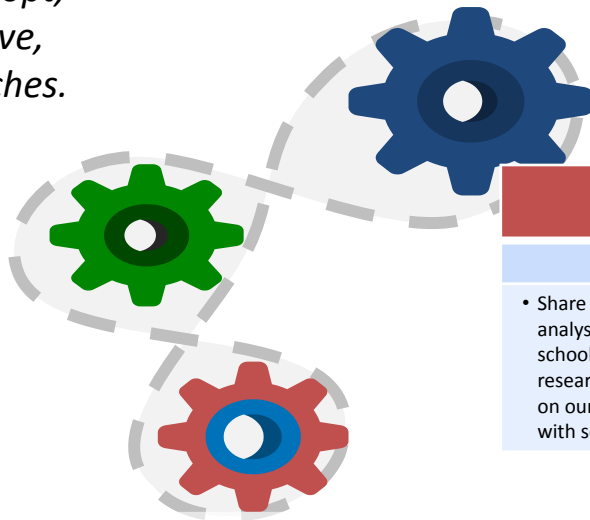
Research and Evaluation

Local Impact

- Share back insights and analysis with partner schools, bringing the newest research and learning to bear on our ongoing local work with schools.

National Impact

- Awarded a \$2.6 million DOJ-grant to rigorously examine the effectiveness of implementation strategies for trauma-informed schools.



We aim to create a **scalable, sustainable** model for culturally-responsive trauma-informed schools to support transformative change in K -12 education locally and nationally.

The Basics of

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, wavy horizontal lines in various shades of purple and pink, spanning the width of the slide.

Trauma Informed Schools



WHAT IS TRAUMA

The harmful interruption
of **safety, agency,
dignity, or belonging**

Overwhelms our ability
to **cope** with or **integrate**
our experience of
an event

Is embodied at multiple
levels: **individual,
collective, systemic,
intergenerational** and/
or **historical**

Can be **acute, chronic,
cumulative, complex**





Some Working Definitions



Safety – the sense of being physically, psychologically and emotionally secure.

Agency-the ability to make a decision, experience reasonable consequences of that decision and make a subsequent decision.

Dignity-the sense of one's place and power in the world.- Self-Worth

Belonging– the expression of being connected, a full member of a group.



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Turn and Talk:

What resonates
with you about
our definition?



A TRAUMA-INFORMED SCHOOL

The diagram features four thick, curved, overlapping bands in blue, yellow, purple, and light blue that sweep across the page. Each band is associated with a key component of a trauma-informed school, indicated by a small black diamond and a thin line. The components are: 'Recognizes' (purple band), 'Realizes' (yellow band), 'Responds' (blue band), and 'Resists Retraumatization' (light blue band).

Realizes

Prevalence &
impact of trauma

Recognizes

Signs of trauma &
needs for support

Responds

To promote individual &
collective healing

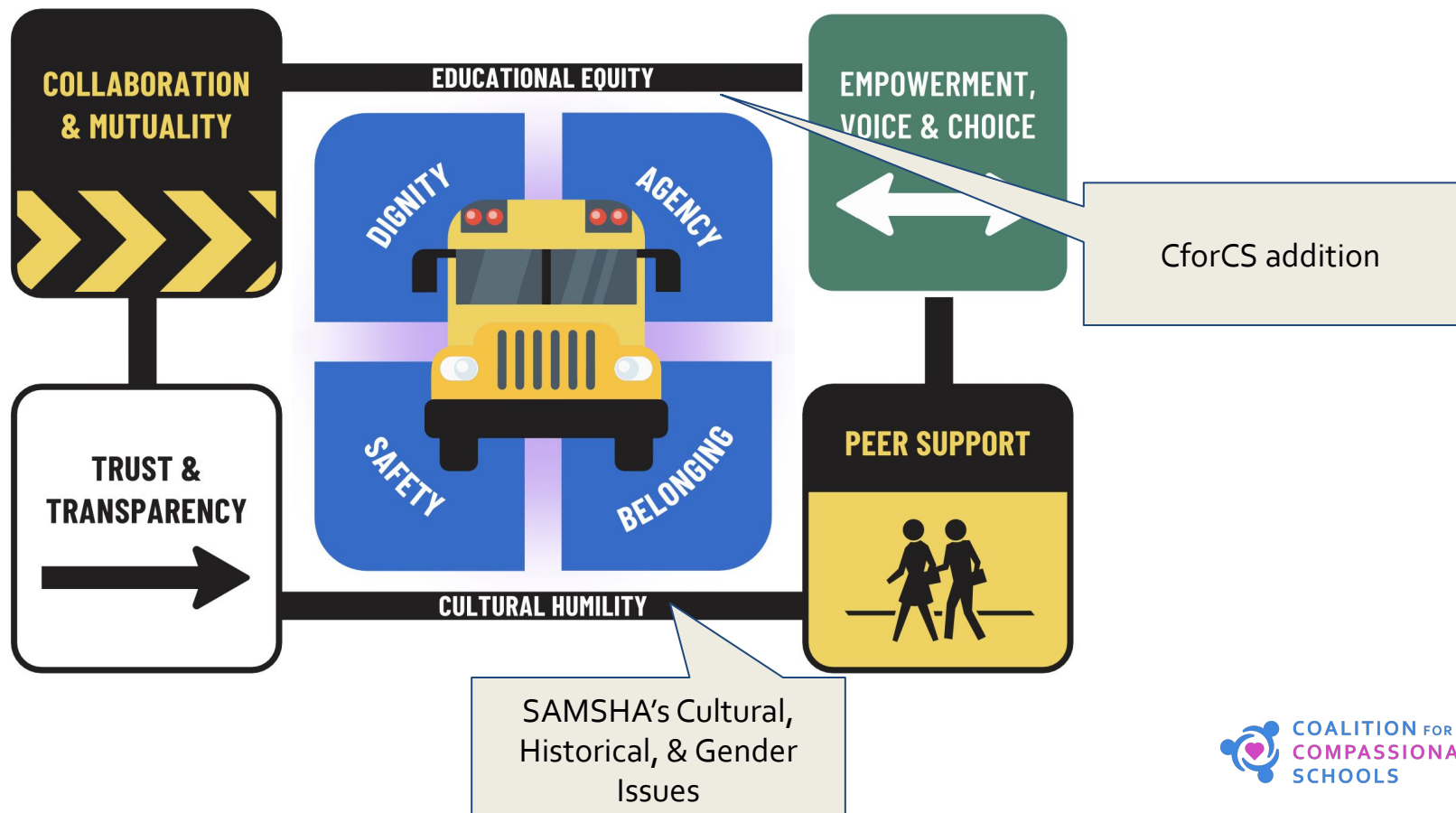
**Resists
Retraumatization**

By using trauma-informed
principles in the classroom, school
community & teacher supports

What is a Trauma- Informed School?

6 Key Principles of Trauma-Informed Schools

adapted from SAMSHA (2014)





Culturally Responsive

“Culturally responsive instruction is “a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.” -Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings

Key characteristics:



Values and centers students' [intersectional] identities and cultures



Materials and processes are **relevant** to students and actively **anti-oppressive**



Relationship building is seen as foundational



Supports students to contribute to the ongoing effort toward equity and social justice



Cultural humility is characterized by active self-reflection and lifelong learning toward gaining deeper awareness, knowledge, and skills



Why is Cultural Humility and Cultural Responsiveness important for our work?

Organizational Level



Increased sense of **belonging** for students & families



Awareness to combat unintentional perpetuation of systems of oppression that may deteriorate a communities' **agency and dignity**, and decrease a sense of **safety**



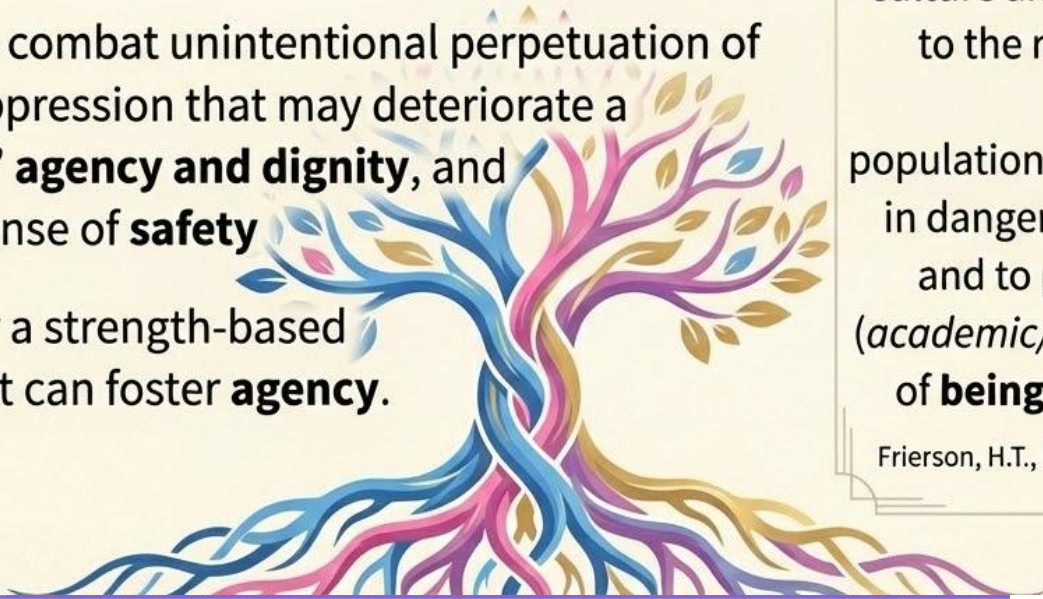
Important for a strength-based approach that can foster **agency**.

“

“To ignore the reality of the existence of the influence of culture and to be unresponsive to the needs of the target

population is to put the program in danger of being ineffective and to put the evaluation (*academic/behavioral*) in danger of **being seriously flawed.**”

Frierson, H.T., Hood, S., & Hughes, G.B. (2002)



Realizes

Prevalence &
impact of trauma

Systemic

Policies

Institutions

Collective

Kin

Community

Individual

Personal

Interpersonal

Realize the
impact of
trauma in the
community of
interest



Race-Based Traumatic Stress



Mental health disparities among racial and ethnic “minorities” may be related to which **affect their mental health and contribute to their lower economic, social, and political status**” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS, 2001, p.4).



Compared to income-matched Whites, Black children have a higher daily base rate of cortisol, and in general, Black people exhibit a **cortisol pattern that is consistent with PTSD** (Cohen, Schwartz, et al., 2006; Hajat et al., 2010; Gunnar et al 2022, Karlamangla et al., 2013).

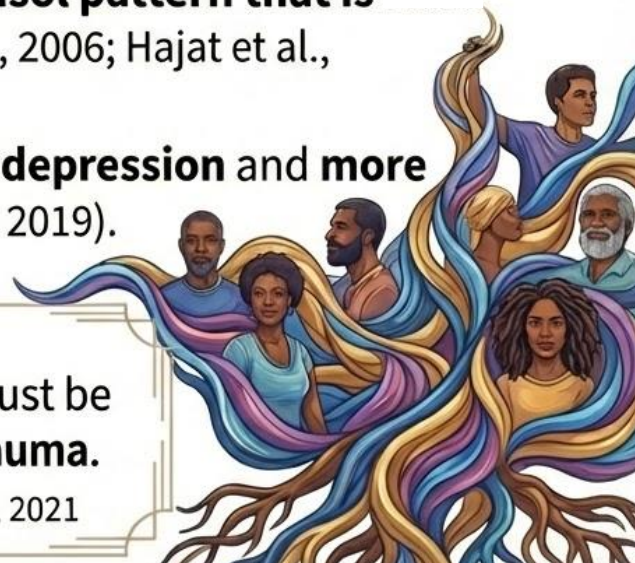


Black people, on average, **express more symptoms of depression and more stress accumulation over time** than Whites. (Williams, 2019).

“

We believe: To be fully trauma informed, an organization must be culturally informed- **learn the history and context of the trauma.**

CforCS, 2021



Prevalent issues in our community

- Systemic racism
 - Mass incarceration
 - Over-policed neighborhoods
 - Gentrification
 - Intergenerational Poverty
- Maternal Stress & Depression
- Violence exposure
- Child abuse & neglect

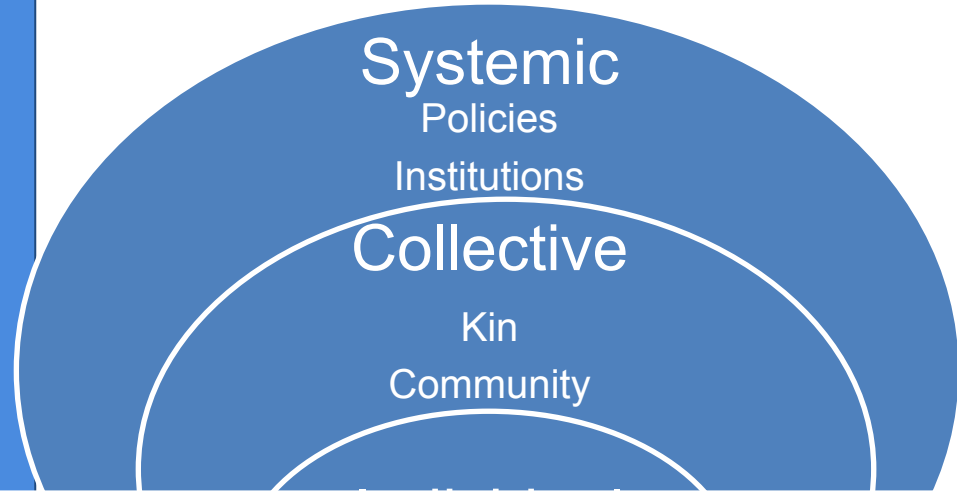
We support whole-school and whole-community approaches that confront the causes, not just symptoms

*ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. It's a term used to describe households that earn more than the federal poverty level but can't afford basic necessities.

(20 year life expectancy gap)

- Separation/Deportation threat and reality

Trauma can be...



Intergenerational (Epigenetics & Behavioral)

Historical

Recognizes

Signs of trauma & needs for support

Realizes

Prevalence & impact of trauma

Responds

To promote individual & collective healing

*A highly sensitive stress-response system constantly on the lookout for threats can produce **patterns of behavior** that are **self-defeating** in school: **fighting, talking back, acting up**, and, more subtly, going through each day **perpetually wary of connection** with peers or teachers."*

-- Paul Tough, 2016

Recognize the signs, the behaviors

"Trauma decontextualized in a person looks like personality. Trauma decontextualized in a family looks like family traits. Trauma decontextualized in people looks like culture."

— Resmaa Menakem



@TransAffirm

Behavioral Adaptations to Chronic Trauma

How do we **recognize** the signs of trauma and the need for support in reclaiming safety, agency, dignity, or belonging?

Defense type	Recognize Signs	Worldview Adaptations (often subconscious beliefs)
Fight	• Easily frustrated, overwhelmed, or “set off” • Unpredictable emotional reactions • Angry, argumentative	• “The world is dangerous, and I have to protect myself.” • “If I don’t stand up for myself, no one else will.” • “People will hurt me if I let my guard down.”
Flight	• Physical withdrawal (absenteeism) • Avoidance (lateness, procrastination) • Limited participation	• “The world is overwhelming, and I need to escape to stay safe.” • “I can’t handle this, so it’s better to avoid it.” • “If I don’t get involved, I won’t get hurt.”
Freeze	• Zoning out, daydreaming • Inattention	• “The world is unpredictable, and I don’t know how to respond.” • “No matter what I do, it won’t make a difference.” • “It’s safer not to make a choice.”
Fawn	• People pleasing, • overly affectionate • doing over and beyond what is necessary	• “If I keep others happy, I’ll be safe and accepted.” • “If I’m agreeable, people will like me and won’t hurt me.” • “My worth depends on keeping others happy.”

Healing-Centered

Asserts that trauma is systemic and collective as well as individual

- Calls for action in addressing the environmental contexts that cause systemic and collective trauma
- Is asset and strengths-based
- Views those who have experienced trauma as “agents in the creation of their own well-being” rather than victims
- Actively utilizes culture as one pathway toward meaning making and healing (Ginwright, 2018)

Realizes

Prevalence & impact of trauma

Responds

To promote individual & collective healing

tion

**Respond to
promote
healing**

Coping —> Healing

What healing practices exist? What strengths are we drawing on to and foster agency, dignity, and belonging?



Behavioral Adaptations to Chronic Trauma

How do we **respond** to **resist retraumatization** and restore or foster safety, agency, dignity, and belonging?

	Recognize Signs	Offer Supports
Fight	• Easily frustrated, overwhelmed, or “set off” • Unpredictable emotional reactions	• Consistency or clear expectations • Flexible/equitable policies & protocols • Co-create feedback systems that are supportive and bi-directional
Flight	• Physical withdrawal (absenteeism) • Avoidance (lateness, procrastination) • Limited participation	• Objective or genuine curiosity • Connect with optimal individual work styles • Abundant opportunities for self-expression
Freeze	• Zoning out, daydreaming	• Sense of appreciation, competence, • Tasks are clear and broken down into smaller chunks
Fawn	• People pleasing, overly affectionate, doing over and beyond what is necessary	• Ensure a sense of authenticity • Praising honesty • Foster healthy boundaries • Avoid the “curse of competence”

WHAT IS TRAUMA

The harmful interruption
of **safety, agency,
dignity, or belonging**

Our programs **Respond and Resist
Retraumatization** by focusing on the
restoration, creation, and/or fostering
of **safety, agency, dignity, and
belonging**



Meet our Little ROCCs

The Little Researchers of Creative Change (Little ROCCs) program brings together middle school students in 7th and 8th grade to conduct youth participatory action research (YPAR) in their schools, led by Dr. Jesse Chanin.

The Little ROCCs believe that young people should have voice and agency in our schools.

The Little ROCCs are trained in research design and implementation by professors and undergraduates at Tulane, Loyola, and Xavier universities.

ALL Little ROCCs are paid for their participation and presentations



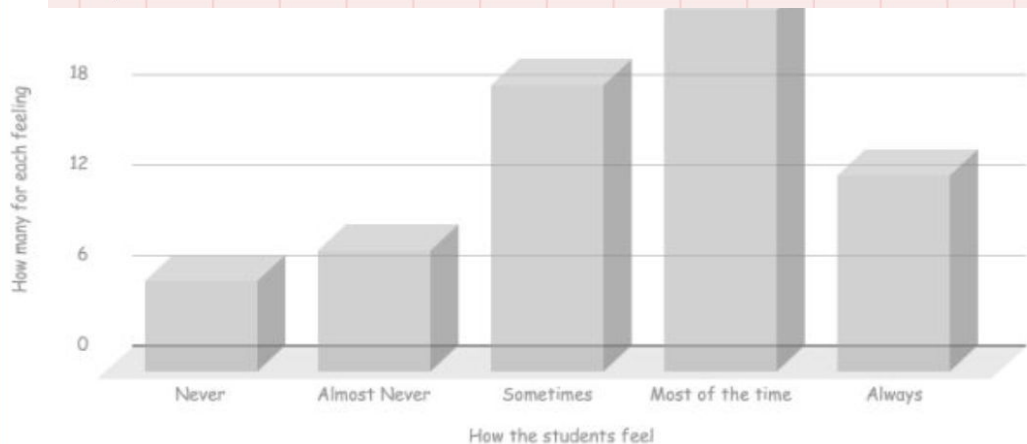
*We know what
we need and
deserve in our
classes and school
communities*

**WE ADVOCATE
FOR OURSELVES
AND OUR PEERS.**

"We're inside all day. We stare at the same walls every day. We eat lunch inside. Electives are inside, everything is inside."

-7th Grade Student

This quote shows how students at School #2 feel unmotivated because they don't get to go outside or get breaks. They also talked about how breaks or chances to go outside are taken away as punishment. Even if only one student is acting up, the whole class might lose outside time.





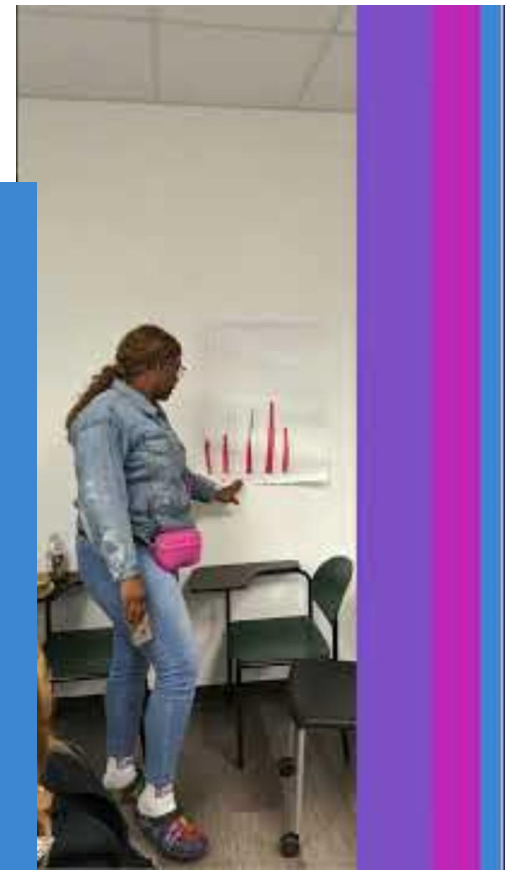
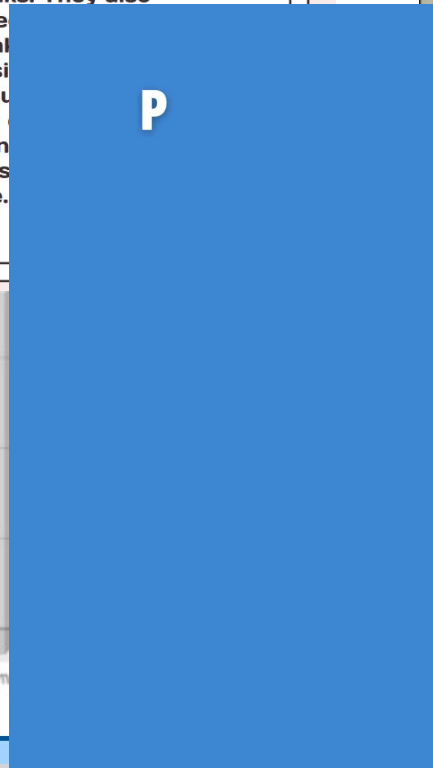
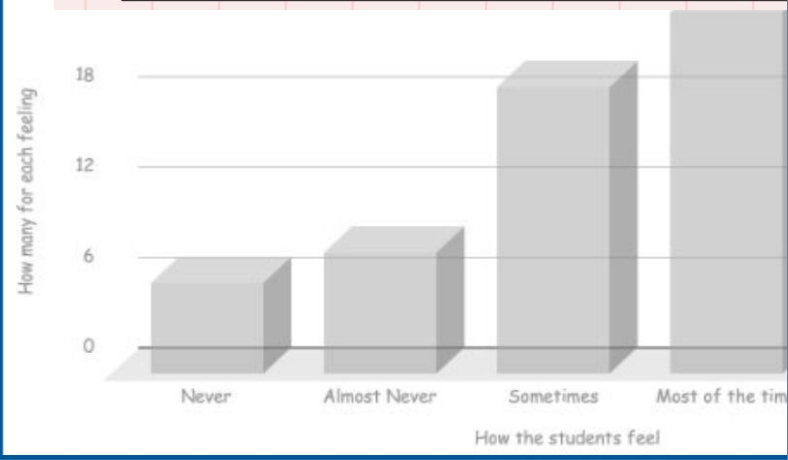


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-7th Grade Student

This quote shows how students at School #2 feel unmotivated because they don't get to go outside or get breaks. They also talk about break outside as punishment only and acting in class time.

Do



Little ROCCs Current status

"Senior" Little ROCCS:

- Have presented to adult and teen service-learning audiences
- Highest rated educator trainings!
- Presented on panels at local and national conferences
- Fee for service professional development!



- 3rd Cohort underway at 2 middle schools, 1 high school
- Conducting walk-throughs using our Trauma Informed walk-through tools
- Recommendations to school leaders





Realizes

Prevalence &
impact of trauma

Recognizes

Signs of trauma &
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Responds

To promote individual &
collective healing

**Resists
Retraumatization**

By using trauma-informed
principles in the classroom, school
community & teacher supports

**Resist
Retraumatization
through actions:
Inclusive
Prevention
Intervention**

What healing practices
exist? What strengths are
we drawing on to and
foster agency, dignity, and
belonging?

Our Approach

**Sustain Safety Agency,
Dignity, Belonging through
Inclusive Practices**



Phased Lessons Learned Over Time:

Shared Learning and Adaptation

What Limited Progress...



Educator stress and burnout rose when trauma-informed supports were inconsistent



Short-term pilots showed promise but **stalled** without continuity and coordination



Training without role clarity or system alignment did not sustain change

What's Made Progress Possible...



Shared language and focus on core practices improved feasibility and trust to re-engage as needs and resources evolved



Distributed leadership and champions extended learning across roles and settings



More Time, extensive coordination support by a credible and trusted team has supported more sustainable integration efforts



Evolution of Programming Response and Pivots “The Pivot is the Practice”

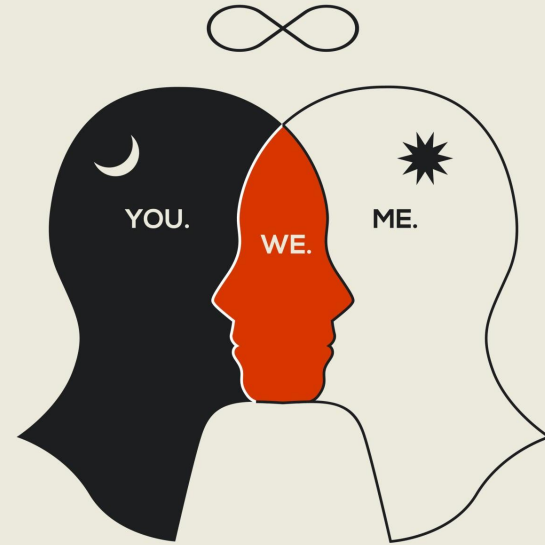


Empathy Research

(Stickdorn & Schnieder, 2012; Thomas & McDonogh, 2013)

Foundational Framing Questions:

1. Who are our shared interest partners and what are they experiencing?
2. What do they value or aspire to?
3. How do their experiences vary and why?
4. What can we learn from positive deviance?



DESIGN THINKING

1. What experiences, challenges, and successes have your programs/schools experienced over the past year?

Evolution of Trauma-Informed Schools Project



2016-2021

Phase 1– Foundation & “The Stress Test”

Context:

- Pressure to improve school climate and discipline.
- Trauma became visible and unavoidable
- COVID profoundly disrupted schools and educator wellbeing

Success!

- Trauma-Informed practices took root at classroom & schoolwide levels
- Student and Family Voice informed design and refinement
- Early evidence showed improved classroom climate-even during disruption
- Teacher Well-being Centered in Curriculum

Challenges

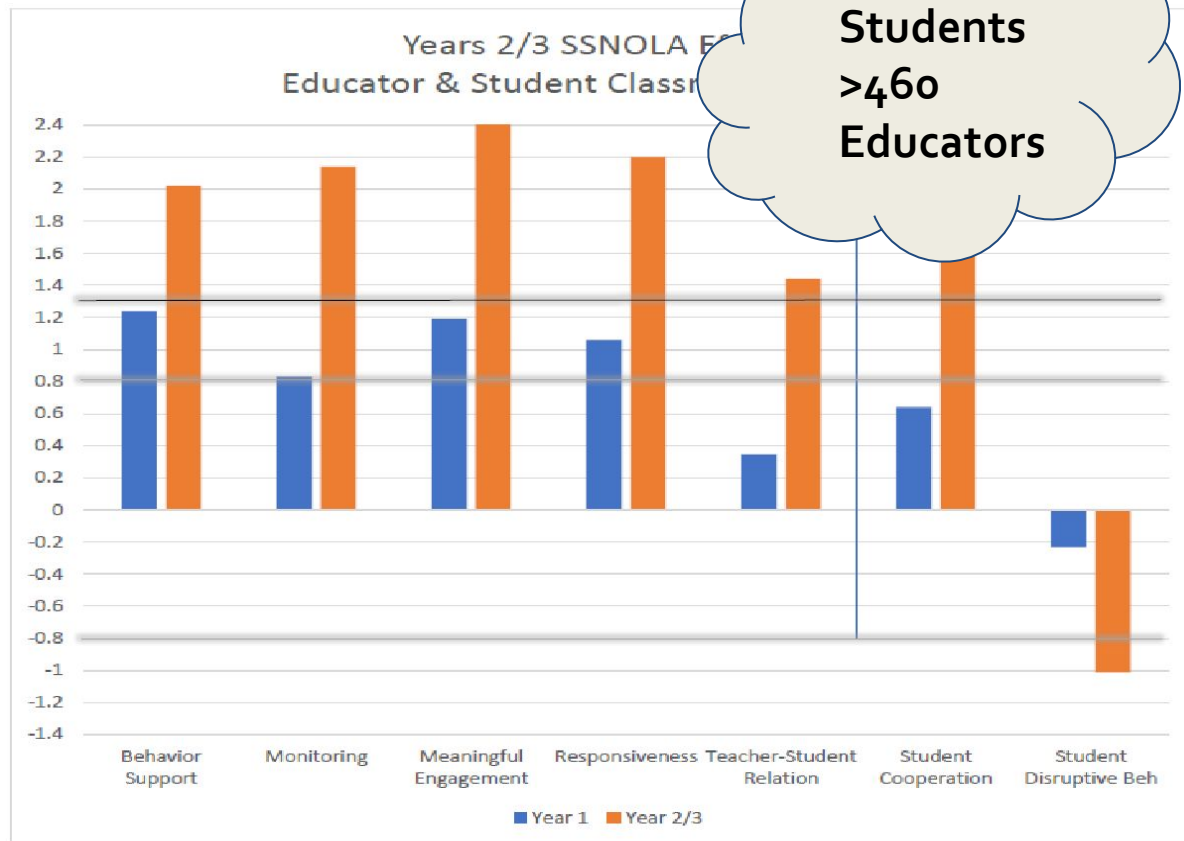
- Closures and leadership turnover disrupted continuity, trust-building, and data collection
- Virtual/Hybrid environments strained relationships and collective care
- Effective Embedded supports models were hard to sustain/ scale

Pivots

- Shift from embedded support to shared capacity-building around core trauma-informed practices
- Built internal leadership through a Training-of-Trainers model

Performance Data: What We Learned

“ Findings from a multi-baseline study across five K-8 New Orleans charter schools showed consistent improvements in educator practices, student engagement, and classroom climate over time.”



Evolution of Trauma-Informed Schools Project



2022-2024

Phase 2: 2022-2024– From Pilot to Scalable Infrastructure

Context

- Systems gaps revealed need for culture, trust, belonging, and relational repair
- COVID intensified student and family mental health needs, expanding schools' role
- Educators upskilled rapidly without support, fueling persistent burnout

Pivots

- Reduced role overload by clarifying trauma-informed responsibilities across MTSS tiers
- Shifted to a 3-year model and restored coalition support to support sustainability

Success!

- Piloted expanded peer support and champion development across school teams, district resources, and university partnerships
- Developed tools to assess readiness and guide implementation
- Collected citywide educator stress data to inform priorities

Challenges

- Virtual/Hybrid scheduled strained rituals, routines, and relationships
- Pilot Expansion into traditional school district- JP Schools slowed by centralized structures and protocols, leadership changes

Evolution of Trauma-Informed Schools Project



2025- Forward

Phase 3– Stabilizing Systems in Ongoing Crisis

Context: Schools experiencing traumatic stress on multiple levels

- Chronic budget gaps and staffing instability
- Policy shifts related to closures, immigration enforcement, shrinking resources for academic and enrichment supports

Success!

- Launched Univ. Screening supports to align MTSS priorities
- Participatory Action Research to strengthen caregiver trust and youth voice
- Piloted Asynchronous trainings to sustained educator access

Challenges

- Limited funding as the pool gets deeper
- Educator and Education Leader Well-being diminished
- Staff shortages ongoing

Pivots

- Broadening our audience to communities that hold schools
- Collaborative, multi disciplinary grant writing
- High turnover → focus on Individual change in data story



Why We Looked Back: Focusing on Individual Champions

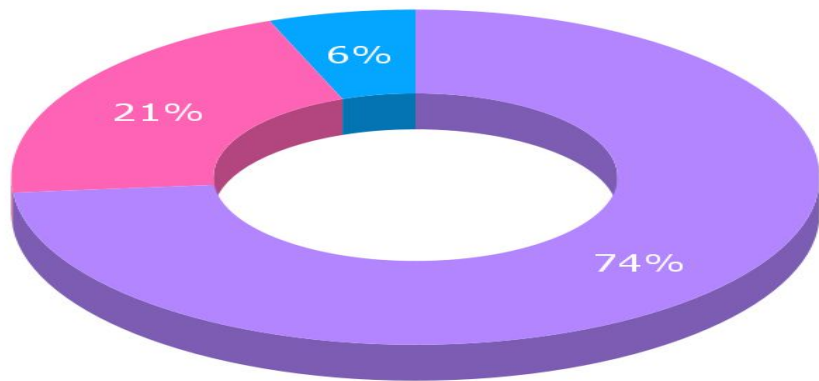
The Training of Trainers (ToT) project was developed *increase the capacity* of the New Orleans public school system to overcome the structural challenges of creating and sustaining trauma-informed schools.

How did the program impact the capacity of *individual participants* to act as champions for TIS, and how can we (CforCS) continue supporting them?

- *Networks of support*
- *Impactful programming*
- *Barriers and challenges*
- *Engagement needs and preferences*



What We Heard: Individual Impact is Strong



● Very Likely ● Likely ● Unlikely
● Very Unlikely

“I think Trauma-Informed is a lens and therefore I use it all of the time. Instead of thinking about Whether a situation is ‘Good’ or ‘Bad’, I think about whether it is leading to connection, dignity, safety, or disrupting those things and potentially activating a trauma response.”

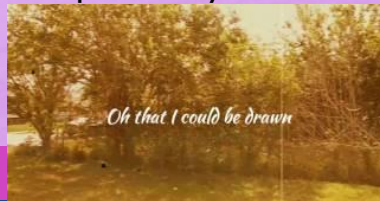
ring
quite

Reflect *(individual reflection, 2 minutes)* & Share *(with a partner)*

1. What experiences, challenges, and successes have your programs/schools experienced over the past year?
2. What is guiding the pivots you have made?
3. How are you keeping the safety dignity and belonging of your partners & communities in mind?
4. What possibilities emerge from seasons of transition and change?



"I Could be Drawn" by
Spirit McIntyre



Oh that I could be drawn



COALITION FOR
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The Journey from Traditional Educator to Trauma-Informed while Building a Data Driven Culture Through Trauma-Informed Multi-Tiered Systems of Support



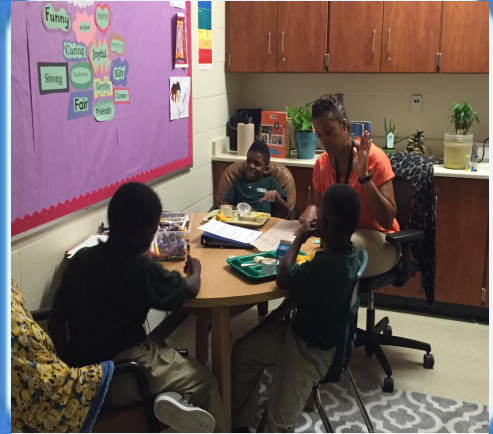
On this leg of the journey we will discuss:



- Paradigm shift
- School partners
 - Yr 1 The pilot
 - Yr 2 Pilot expansion
 - Yr 3 Building the Capacity for the years ahead



The road from traditional to trauma-informed



The Trauma-Informed Educator: A Paradigm Shift

Establishing Systems that foster Safety and Trauma-informed Care through MTSS

Establishing physical and psychological safety as the foundation for all learning and relationship building through a systems approach and using data to drive decisions.

Building Connections within the school community and community partners

Prioritizing relationships and emotional connections as essential components of educational and social emotional success while leveraging community partners that are experts doing the work.

Understanding Trauma

Recognizing how adverse experiences impact brain development, learning capacity, and behavioral responses in students.

Our School Partners



Two schools located in one location
Elementary (k-4) Middle (5-8)

949 students
African American 88%
Hispanic 7.6%
White 1.5%
Native American 0.2%
Pacific Islander 0.2%
Asian 0.1%

One school located on two
different campuses

k-8
566 students
Hispanic 60.2%
African American 37.3%
White 2.1%
Pacific Islander 0.2%
Asian 0.2%

What is TI-MTSS

Tier 1: Universal

What works for everybody (at least 80%)

- General School Culture
- Aligned Value systems
- SEL for ALL (Students, Staff, Caregivers)
- YPAR
- **Universal Screening**

Tier 2: Who needs targeted support to access general and aligned system?

Example:

- Social Skills?
- Anger Management

Tier 3: Who needs individualized support to access general and aligned system?

Example:

- Individual, Trauma-specific therapy
- Functional Behavior Analysis
- Individualized Behavioral Plans

Year 1- The Pilot Year Establishing Trauma-Informed Goals and Baseline



Tier 1 assessment



MTSS Teaming



Multiple
Forms of
Data



Building Capacity
through Partnerships
SCHOOLS

Universal Screening Goals:
Tier 1: 100 Students
screened,
Tier 2: 13, Tier 3: 5 referrals

Year 2- Expanding The Pilot

Expanded
Partnerships-
UCONN/ESSY
CBNO
Tulane University
PFDL
IWES



MTSS Team
create Pathways
of support
Small SEL group
Small trauma
group-Individual
therapy
FBA/BIPS

Universal Screening
Student Report and Teacher
Report:
T1: 435 Students
T2: 35 students screened
16 received T-I small group



Summer
resources

The *Practice* of US as an Intervention

"I feel like I was able to **express my feelings in a better way** than I do most of the time"

"After answering the questions I **feel pleasantly relaxed**"

"I can finally **express how I feel** and not box it in all the time. I feel great"

"I feel good about myself and **it shows that this school cares about us**"

"A **sense of relief** because I get to share how I feel and I don't have to keep it to myself that much anymore"

"Like I can tell you guys how I'm feeling in the real world bc **sometimes people don't really understand when something is going on with you so you get in trouble most of the time** when some people don't know what your going through"

"These questions gave me a chance to **relieve my stress and feel safe and more comfortable at school**"





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Small Social Emotional Learning group

- ★ Universal screening data, SAEBRS and school data used to determine group makeup
- ★ University students co-facilitated
- ★ SEL curriculum used for tier I was used with the small group
- ★ Group met once a week for the entire school year
- ★ [SAEBRS](#) used in the Spring



Year 3 (last year!)- Building the capacity to do the work



Implementation
-grades screened
-Crisis planning sessions

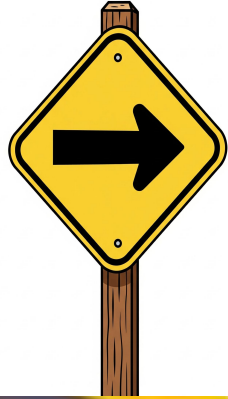


School Champions
-asynchronous and synchronous



BOY check-in
- goal setting
-identifying team(s) leading the work





THE ROAD AHEAD

- Developing Tiered Supports for Teachers
- Peer Support (student & Teachers)
- Health Equity
- Advocacy
- The Village that holds families
- Direct Services





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Thank You

Stay in touch, go to
www.CforCS.org and May
CforCS be with you Always!



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Current CforCS Programming

Trauma-Informed Schools Project

Current Programming



Senior Program Manager, Universal Screening and Tier 2 Supports

- Guides schools in using early screening tools to identify student needs and strengths.
- Supports the development of MTSS Systems among school administrators and staff
- Supports school leaders in building reliable, relational Tier 2 MTSS practices
- Helps leaders unpack habits, identify growth areas, and co-design action plans for lasting change.



Strategic Impact & Engagement Fellow, Coalition for Compassionate Schools

- Collects and synthesizes implementation data and feedback to inform program improvement and fidelity.
- Supports APs, coaches, and engagement leads to deepen trauma-informed school leadership practices.
- Develops sustainable pathways for parent leadership, advocacy education, and family-school partnership.
- Aligns cross-role strategy and planning, using data and action research to shape policy and training.



Modular Local, Regional, and National Training & Dissemination

- Design training modules around components of the ToT and other programming
- Provide an onboarding to new partners, deep dives into particular content of interest for partners, and offboarding of ToT cohort schools.
- Consult and build connections with regional and national partners to grow our work
- Coordinate communications strategy for dissemination of research, programming, and impact.

Trauma-Informed Schools Project

Current Programming



- Design and implement youth participatory action research (YPAR) programming
- Train undergraduates at Tulane, Xavier, and Loyola to effectively mentor middle school researchers
- Collaborate with youth-serving partners to ensure that youth voice and engagement remain at the forefront of the Coalition's work



Enriched Learning & School Coordinator

- Consults, coaches, and collaborates with staff, after school teams, and community partners to embed trauma-informed enrichment into daily school life that align with school-wide MTSS values.
- Co-designs sustainable, resource-light structures for meaningful student engagement in clubs, advisory, and enrichment programs.
- Provides training and technical assistance using tools like YPQI while supporting integration with school-based wellness and climate strategies.



Climate and Community Specialist

- Works with YPAR researchers and PAR researchers to actualize their recommendations in their unique school settings
- Consults with schools on their PBIS systems to make sure they are aligned with Trauma Informed strategies (TI-PBIS).

Projects Supported by MTSS Students

- Universal Screening
- Tier 2 SEL Interventions
- Trauma Stewardship Series
 - Equips educators, school leaders, and frontline staff with tools to navigate burnout, compassion fatigue, and chronic stress through reflective practice and sustainable care strategies.
 - A collective healing experience that centers collective reflection, nervous system care, and joyful accountability for educators navigating stress and systems change.



What's Next

New Programs/Initiatives

- Partner with UConn's ESSY Project
- Alumni Network
- Webinar Modules
- PAR/YPAR, PBIS

New Populations

- Parents
- High School
- Early Childhood
- Youth Facing Community Orgs
- Juvenile Justice System



Race-Based Traumatic Stress

Mental health disparities among racial and ethnic minorities may be related to “minorities’ ” historical and present struggles with racism and discrimination, which affect their mental health and contribute to their lower economic, social, and political status” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2001, p.4).

- Compared to income-matched Whites, Black children have a higher daily base rate of cortisol, and in general, Black people exhibit a **cortisol pattern that is consistent with the profile of people who experience chronic stress or have been diagnosed with PTSD** (Cohen, Schwartz, et al., 2006; Hajat et al., 2010; Gunnar et al 2022, Karlamangla et al., 2013)
- Black people, on average, express more symptoms of depression and more stress accumulation over time than Whites. (Williams, 2019)
- **We believe: To be fully trauma informed, an organization must be culturally informed- know the history and context**

Student prevalence , Post-COVID

From CDC Adolescent
Behavioral Experiences Survey
(2021)

- More than a third (37%) of high school students reported they experienced poor mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic,
- 44% reported they persistently felt sad or hopeless during the past year.
- More than half (55%) reported they experienced emotional abuse by a parent or other adult in the home, including swearing at, insulting, or putting down the student.
- 11% experienced physical abuse by a parent or other adult in the home, including hitting, beating, kicking, or physically hurting the student.

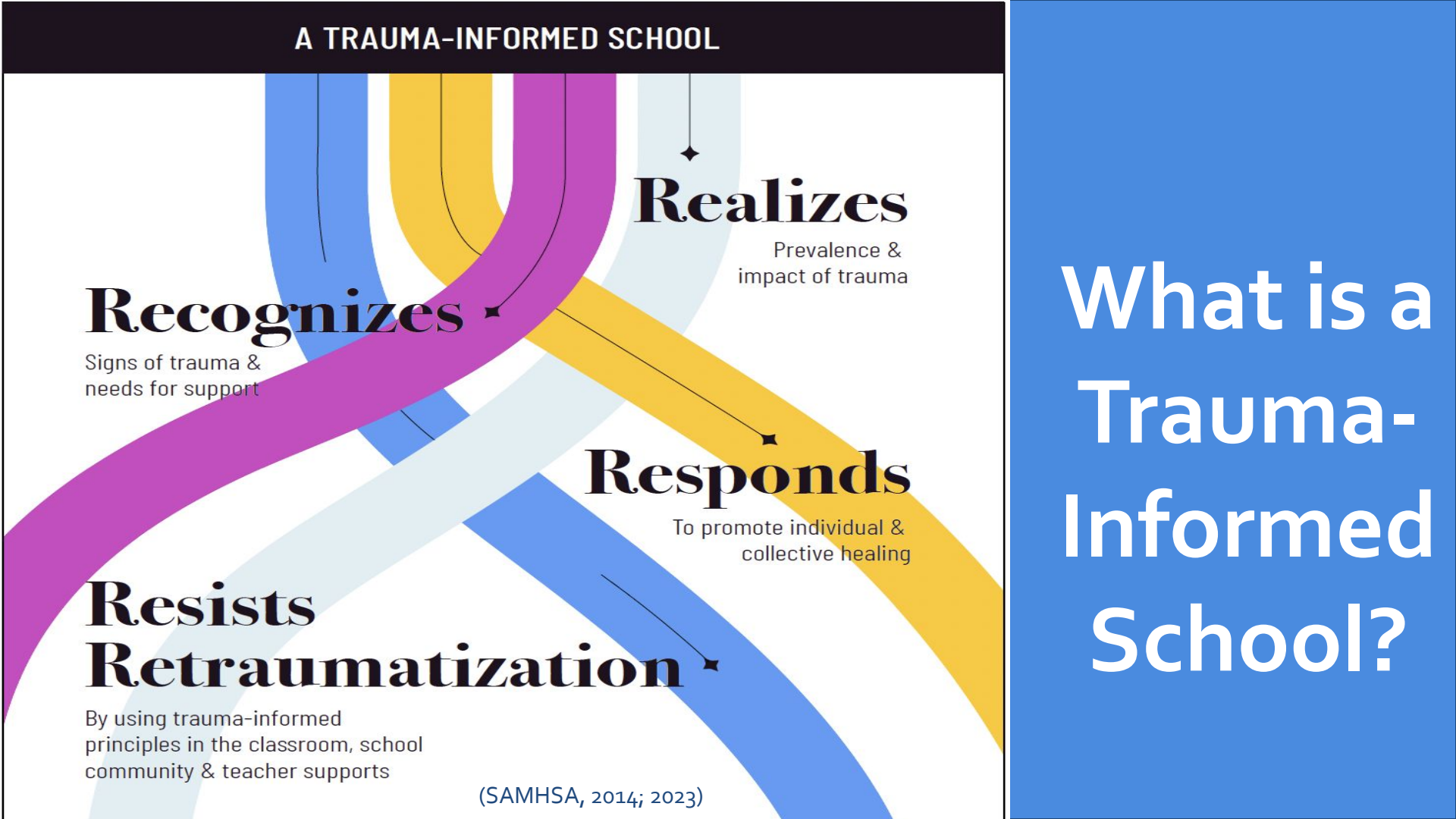
School Connectedness

From CDC Adolescent
Behavioral Experiences Survey
(2021)

Youth who felt connected to adults and peers at school were **significantly less likely** than those who did not:

- to report persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness (35% vs. 53%);
- seriously considered attempting suicide (14% vs. 26%); or attempted suicide (6% vs. 12%).

A TRAUMA-INFORMED SCHOOL

The diagram features four thick, curved, overlapping bands in blue, yellow, purple, and light blue that sweep across the page. Each band points towards one of the four core components of a trauma-informed school. Small black diamonds mark the intersection points of the bands.

Recognizes *

Signs of trauma &
needs for support

Realizes

Prevalence &
impact of trauma

Responds

To promote individual &
collective healing

**Resists
Retraumatization** *

By using trauma-informed
principles in the classroom, school
community & teacher supports

(SAMHSA, 2014; 2023)

What is a Trauma- Informed School?

Key Points



- The rider represents our rational/intentional mind.
- The Elephant represents our instinctive mind that reacts to danger, pain, & pleasure.
- The Path represents the common situations and environments that we navigate in our daily lives.

How Does Change Happen?

- Provide the rider clear and right-sized direction
- Honor the elephant with intention, emotional connection and grace
- Shape pathways to make change more likely by reducing obstacles, encourage new habits, create ease and flow

Trauma-Informed Schools

The background of the slide is a solid magenta color. Below the title, there are several overlapping, wavy horizontal lines in various shades of blue and purple, creating a layered, water-like effect.

What does being trauma-informed mean?

Developing a Trauma Lens



*How does
trauma
impact
learning?*

What Feels Threatening to the Brain in a Classroom?

Even common classroom experiences can trigger a stress response—especially for students carrying grief, trauma, or chronic stress.

- Unpredictable changes in routines or schedules
- Not understanding the task or expectations
- Being singled out or publicly corrected
- Sudden loud noises or yelling
- Experiences of peer conflict or rejection
- Personal frustration or shame

As the thinking brain becomes weak, students can have:

- Difficulty paying attention, problem solving, setting goals, taking perspective, retrieving prior learning
- Difficulty thinking clearly
- Difficulty storing, consolidating, and retrieving new information



Impact and Performance Data

Performance Data

- When trauma-informed principles are infused into school policies, including handling the stressors and losses associated with the pandemic,
 - Educators also felt less stress
- More educator stress is associated with
 - Burnout and (for school mental health staff) secondary traumatic stress
 - Finding a lack of meaning in their work
 - Depression, anxiety, and (for school mental health staff) PTSD symptoms
- Educators are more likely to express turnover intention when they are
 - Burned out and (for school mental health staff) experiencing secondary traumatic stress
 - Feeling low self-efficacy and find a lack of meaning in their work (for educators)
 - Experiencing anxiety and depression symptoms (for school mental health staff)
 - Feeling that the school is not using trauma-informed principles to handle stressors (educators) and losses (school mental health staff) associated with the pandemic

Trauma Exposure Among NOLA-Area Youth

> 90% NOLA youth experience community violence.

Homicide is the leading cause of death for children aged 1 – 14.

60% of New Orleans children show signs of PTSD—about **four times the national average**

33% of children in poverty

Evolution of Trauma-Informed Schools Project



2016-2017

Reflection & Integrated Planning Year after TIS-LC Initial Pilot Project;

2017-2018

Embedded Teacher Support Specialist, School-wide Trainings & Consultation, Peer Support Involvement, Student & Family Focus Groups, EOY Planning;

2018-2019*

Embedded Teacher Support Specialist, School-wide Trainings & Consultation, Peer Support Involvement, Student & Family Focus Groups, EOY Planning;

2019-2020

CoVID Hit; Enhanced Educator WellBeing Coaching & Practices, Virtual Training & Consultation;

2020-2021

TOT Project Launched (including JP Schools), 1st CoVID Teacher Wellbeing Survey, Introduced Org Readiness Tool.

2021-2022

2nd CoVID Teacher Wellbeing Survey; Refresher Trainings, Mapping Project-Trauma-informed initiatives in NOLA public schools

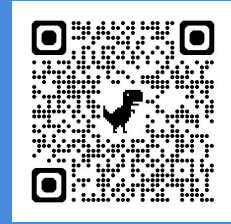
2022-2023

Steering Committee Focus; Coordinated Partnerships; & Dedicated Peer Support Coaching

2023-2024

TI-MTSS Systems Centered Approach & an embedded Tier 3 CBNO Clinician in Year 2, PAR

What Do Students Need From Us?



Learn more about our Little ROCCs here

Who they are:

7th & 8th grade students using research to improve their schools.

What they believe:

Young people deserve voice, agency, and leadership in shaping school culture.

Why we're listening today:

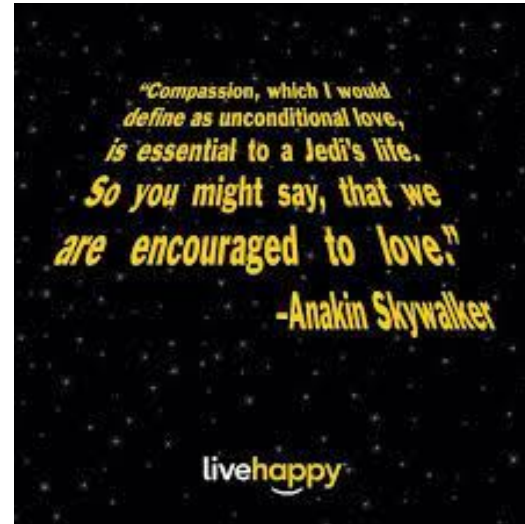
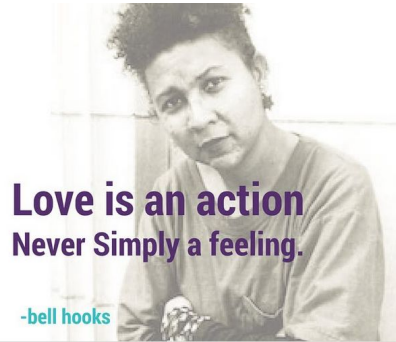
Their PSA challenges adults to reflect on how tone, respect, and relationships shape student experience.



(We'll listen to the PSA now.)



CforCS is with you!



Love in Action
Love is Action

Justice **E**quity **D**iversity **I**nclusion

Kindness **N**ourishment **I**ntentionality **G**roundedness **H**onesty **T**houghtfulness **S**ustainability





Culturally Responsive

Culturally responsive instruction is “a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.” -Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings

Key characteristics:

- **Values and centers** students’ [intersectional] identities and cultures
- Materials and processes are **relevant** to students and actively **anti-oppressive**
- **Relationship building** is seen as foundational
- **Supports students to contribute** to the ongoing effort toward equity and social justice

Cultural humility is characterized by active self-reflection and lifelong learning toward gaining deeper awareness, knowledge, and skills

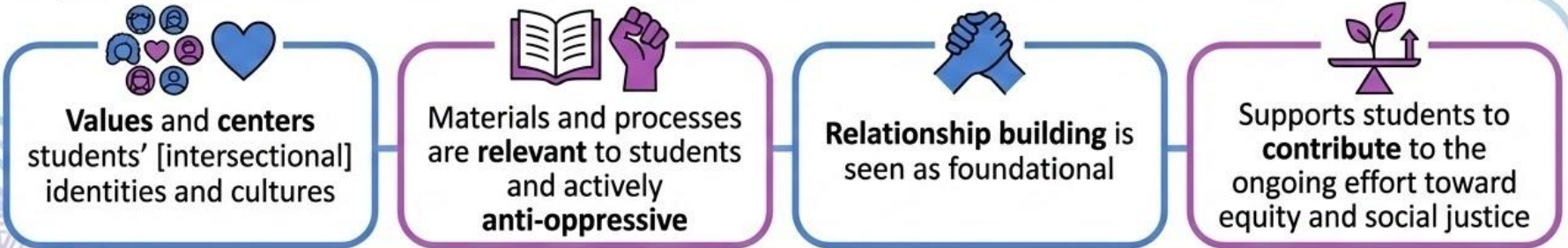




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Key characteristics:



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Why is Cultural Humility and Cultural Responsiveness important for our work?

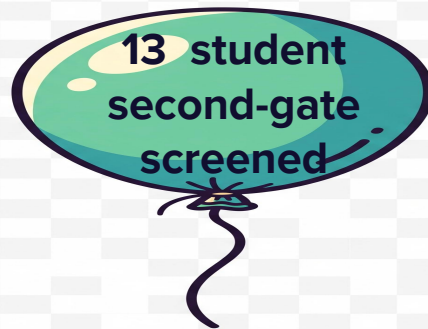
Organizational Level

- Increased sense of **belonging** for students & families
- Awareness to combat unintentional perpetuation of systems of oppression that may deteriorate a communities' **agency and dignity** , and decrease a sense of **safety**
- Important for a strength-based approach that can foster **agency**.
- "To ignore the reality of the existence of the influence of culture and to be unresponsive to the needs of the target population is to put the program in danger of being ineffective and to put the evaluation (*academic/behavioral*) in danger of **being seriously flawed.**" Frierson, H.T., Hood, S., & Hughes, G.B. (2002)





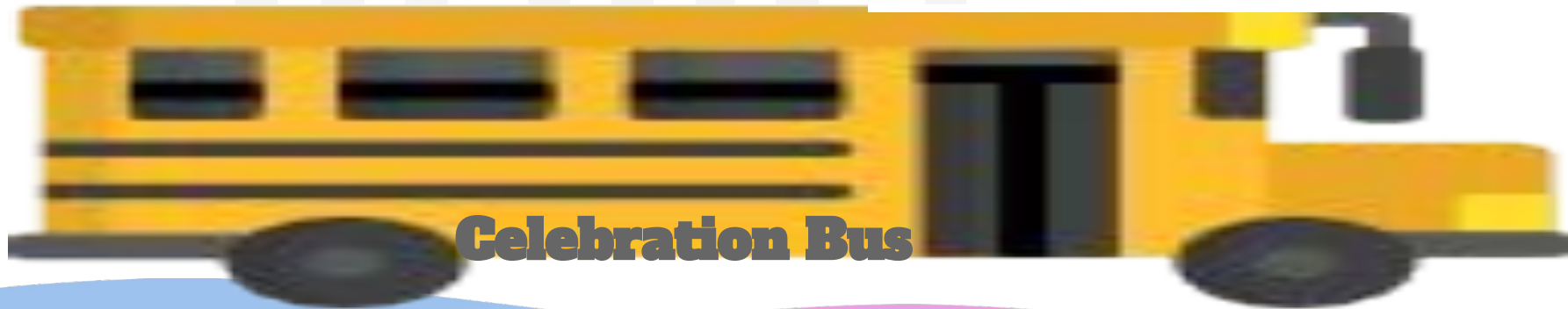
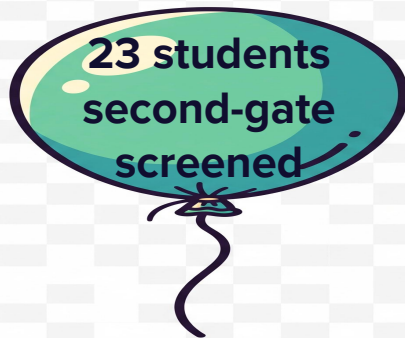
COALITION FOR
COMPASSIONATE
SCHOOLS



Celebration Bus



COALITION FOR COMPASSIONATE SCHOOLS



Celebration Bus



COALITION FOR
COMPASSIONATE
SCHOOLS

Small Social Emotional Learning group

- Universal screening data, SAEBRS and school data used to determine group makeup
- University students co-facilitated
- SEL curriculum used for tier I was used with the small group
- Group met once a week for the entire school year
- SAEBRS used in the Spring





COALITION FOR
COMPASSIONATE
SCHOOLS

Educator Wellbeing



Our Context

$\frac{2}{3}$ of American Youth
Experience a Traumatic event,
(NIH, 2024)

In New Orleans:

> **90%** experience community violence.

> **55%** have experienced **3 or more** traumas.

The most common traumatic experiences here
are **exposure to community violence** and
loss of a loved one.

Roots:

Child poverty ~37%,

NOLAPS poverty rate: 84%

Unaffordable housing at ~51% (data center)

ALICE households? *

Educator Mental Health c. 2021)

35% Depression

36% Anxiety

19% PTSD

2025 is Katrina 20th

2025 is COVID 5th

**We support whole-school and whole-community approaches that
confront the causes, not just symptoms**

*ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. It's a term used to describe households that earn more than the federal poverty level but can't afford basic necessities.



Race-Based Traumatic Stress

- Mental health disparities among racial and ethnic “minorities” may be related to “minorities’ ” historical and present struggles with racism and discrimination, which **affect their mental health and contribute to their lower economic, social, and political status**” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2001, p.4).
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- Black people, on average, **express more symptoms of depression and more stress accumulation** over time than Whites. (Williams, 2019)

We believe: To be fully trauma informed, an organization must be culturally informed- learn the history and context of the trauma

WHAT IS TRAUMA

The harmful interruption
of **safety, agency,
dignity, or belonging**

One way we **Respond** on the *program level*:

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) to **restore, create, and/or foster** safety, agency, dignity, and belonging



A TRAUMA-INFORMED SCHOOL

Recognizes

Signs of trauma &
needs for support

Realizes

Prevalence &
impact of trauma

Responds

To promote individual &
collective healing

**Resists
Retraumatization**

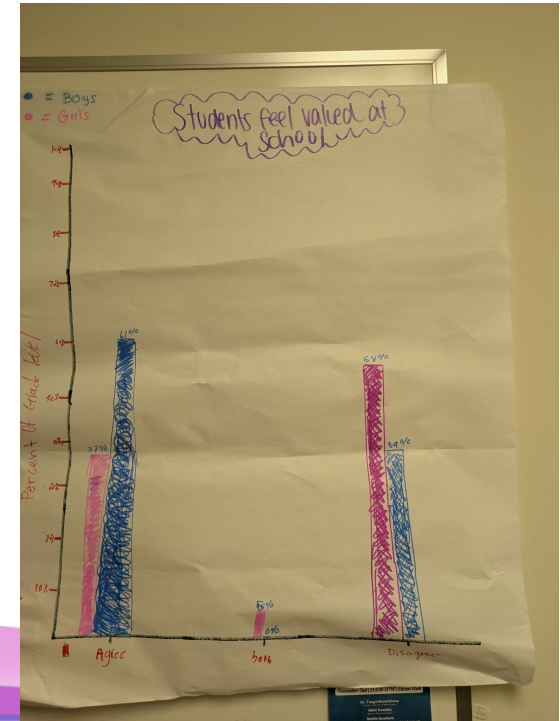
By using trauma-informed
principles in the classroom, school
community & teacher supports

YPAR Public Service Announcements (SY 2024-2025)

[Esperanza PSA](#)

[Foundation Prep](#)

[KIPP Leadership Academy](#)



Evolution of Trauma-Informed Schools Project



2016-2018

Early Days of Safe Schools NOLA Study

Context:

- Network and District-level pressure to improve school climate and reduce suspensions.
- Trauma experiences highlighted in mainstream culture

Success!

- Reflection & Integrated Planning Year after TIS-LC Initial Pilot Project;
- Embedded Teacher Support Specialists
- Developed and refined culturally relevant School-wide Trainings & Consultation,
- Student & Family Focus Groups,

Challenges

- Forces school closures and ownership transitions impacted data collection
- Research was greatly affected by shifts of the school. Couldn't make meaning of the data within the current context

Pivots

- Shift to micro steps: establish shared language, increased leadership presence and shared learning
- Identified what schools wanted and refined and focused on the 3 basic practices

Outcomes from Safe Schools NOLA Trial



- Multiple baseline design study in 5 K-8 New Orleans public charter schools with 3544 students and 462 educators
- Implementation outcomes
 - Educators were satisfied and found trauma-informed schools to be acceptable
 - Can be implemented with fidelity with implementation supports, but feasibility is a concern
- Teacher and school capacity outcomes
 - Improved educator knowledge and attitudes favorable to trauma-informed approaches
 - Improved teacher behaviors including student engagement, classroom behavior management, and positive teacher-student interactions
 - System became more supportive of trauma-informed approaches as time passed, which is critical in supporting the other effects
 - Improved school-wide policies and practices, classroom strategies and techniques, and collaborations and linkages with mental health

Where We've Been

Train-the-Trainer Schools Cohort 1		Trauma-Informed Schools Program	
12	IDEA Oscar Dunn	18	Community Academies of New Orleans
13	Langston Hughes Academy	19	KIPP Leadership Academy
14	Homer A. Plessy Community School	20	KIPP Leadership Primary
Train-the-Trainer Schools Cohort 2		Youth Participatory Action Research	
15	Encore Academy	11	ReNEW Schaumburg
16	Martin Behrman Charter School	14	Homer Plessy Middle School (w/Parents)
17	Mildred Osborne Charter School	22	New Harmony High School (w/Parents)
		23	ReNEW Laurel Middle School



Trauma Informed Learning Collaborative	
1	KIPP Believe Primary
2	New Orleans Charter Science & Mathematics High School
3	Lawrence D. Crocker College Prep
4	Success Preparatory Academy
5	G.W. Carver High School
6	Lafayette Academy

Safe Schools NOLA	
6	Samuel J. Green Charter School
7	FristLine at Live Oak
8	ReNEW SciTech Academy
9	Phillis Wheatley Community School
10	Arthur Ashe Charter School
11	ReNew Schaumburg Elementary

Adapted from: Bullington, J., & Webster, R. A. (2018). The Children of Central City.

Evolution of Trauma-Informed Schools Project



2019-2022

COVID-Era Expansion Centering Educator TOT & Wellbeing & School Readiness

Context:

- CoVID disrupted school operations
- Student & Family MH and family support needs revealed
- Educators were expected to upskill quickly and return to the classroom prematurely

Success!

- Funded Coalition Coordinator
- Piloted dedicated Peer Support Coaching as Champions
- Piloted dedicated Trauma-Informed Social Workers and Interns
- Designed and Introduced Org Readiness Tool
- Collected City-wide CoVID Wellbeing Data for Educators

Challenges

- Virtual/Hybrid scheduled strained rituals, routines, and relationships
- Pilot Expansion into traditional school district- JP Schools slowed by centralized structures and protocols, leadership changes

Pivots

- Transition from embedded specialist model to Training of Trainers for School leaders and Campus Champions
- Move to a year model reflecting Implementation Research

Phased Lessons Learned Over Time: Shared Learning and Adaptation

What Limited Progress...

- Educator stress and burnout rose when trauma-informed supports were inconsistent
- Short-term pilots showed promise but stalled without continuity and coordination
- Training without role clarity or system alignment did not sustain change

What's Made Progress Possible...

- Shared language and focus on core practices improved feasibility and trust to re-engage as needs and resources evolved
- Distributed leadership and champions extended learning across roles and settings
- More Time, extensive coordination support by a credible and trusted team has supported more sustainable integration efforts

Performance Data

- When trauma-informed principles are infused into school policies, including handling the stressors and losses associated with the pandemic,
 - Educators also felt less stress
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 - Feeling that the school is not using trauma-informed principles to handle stressors (educators) and losses (school mental health staff) associated with the pandemic

Evolution of Trauma-Informed Schools Project



2023-2024

TI-MTSS Systems Centered Approach

Context: Schools were experiencing multi-layered pressure

- Lingering post-pandemic patterns with student behavior, attendance, and adult bandwidth
- Fragmented communication systems across networks and staff departments
- Staff fatigue, burnout, limited time for deeper engagement

Success!

- Expanded team capacity for piloting dissemination efforts and partnership engagement
- Launched internal shift toward TI- systems design and relationship building for coalition
- Increased visibility of mental-health/wellbeing as a priority
- Universal screening pilot

Challenges

- Complexity of needs across schools made initial virtual TI-MTSS Learning pilot not viable across networks
- Competing Initiatives; deeply inconsistent MTSS infrastructure
- System and funding disruptions prevented early year implementation in some schools

Pivots

- Increased intentionality around “who’s in the room”

Evolution of Trauma-Informed Schools Project



2024-2025

Universal Screening using the ESSY, ESSY pilot, Educator Wellbeing, 2nd Cohort of YPAR,

Context: Schools experiencing multiple stressors

- Budget problems from the City
- Staff shortages
- ICE appeared in the Spring
- Looming budget shortages for the Fall makes planning difficult

Success!

- Universal Screening & Triage
- MTSS systems shape up
- Support with assessment, FBAs, BIPs
- ESSY Pilot
- Engaging Alumni

Challenges

- Multiple bottlenecks in communication limited our ability to start programming
- Lost Graduate students as a result
- Difficulties with professional development time
- Changes in Grant structures
- Lack of structure for parent engagement at our partner schools

Pivots

- Asynchronous Learning Module Development
- Planning for Parent PAR

24-25 School Engagement Impact

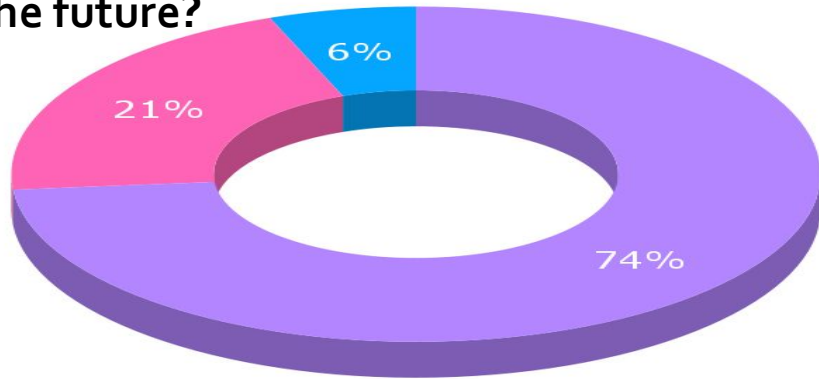
Trauma-Informed Schools Project (TI-MTSS)

- **Educators & Leaders Engaged**
 - *Includes teachers, MTSS team, admin, instructional leaders*
Approx. 232 adults engaged
(Represents participation in screening, PD, MTSS, leadership meetings, wellness efforts)
- **Students Served & Engaged**
 - *Includes students in universal screening, interventions, YPAR, enrichment*
Approx. 766 students engaged
Over 2 Charter Networks (4 schools)
- **Small Group & Individual Support**
 - *Includes SEL groups, trauma intervention, therapy, psycho-ed assessments*
Approx. 79 students in small groups
Approx. 31 students received individual support



What We Heard: Individual Impact is Strong

How likely are you to work with CforCS in the future?



Very Likely Likely Unlikely
Very Unlikely

Individual participants remain connected to CforCS through their continued application of trauma-informed practices and a strong desire for continued connection.