



COALITION FOR
COMPASSIONATE
SCHOOLS

Whole Child, Whole School:
Designing and Installing Trauma-Informed Multi-Tiered Systems
of Support

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2024 National School Social Work Conference
Pre-Conference Session
Baltimore, MD
March 12, 2024
8:30 AM - 4:00 PM
6 CEs

We have no known conflicts of interest to disclose.

- Born on Amelia Island, FL
- Raised in a military family and as a village kid
- 1st Gen HBCU College Grad
- Wellness and MH Counselor
- Recovery Advocate for Artists Post Katrina through AmeriCorps VISTA
- Service Learning and Student Leadership Development
- Restorative Justice Mediator
- Disaster Response & Recovery - 2010 Haiti Earthquake, 2014 Ferguson Riots

Who We Are



Avery Brewton, LCSW, RCP, RA (She/Her)
M.S.W Social Work & Disaster Mental Health
Director, Trauma Informed Schools Project

Who We Are



Anthony Marino (he/him)
M.S. Educational Studies
Dissemination Coordinator

- Born and raised in NY
- Paraprofessional and a long term sub in music
- Moved to New Orleans through TFA
- 5-8 Reading interventionist, English Learner Specialist, and special education
- PK-8 Special Education Coordinator
- Alternative school in jail/detention center
- Leadership coach for a special education nonprofit

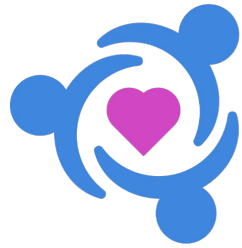


VISION

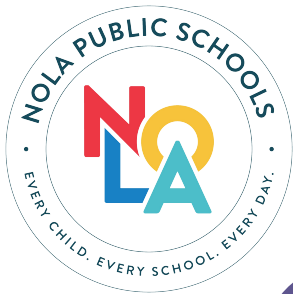
Flourishing school systems that are rooted in community, healing, and human-centered approaches.

MISSION

Build the capacity of schools, students, and parents to create transformative change in education through the adoption, implementation, and sustainment of trauma-informed, healing-centered practices.



COALITION FOR COMPASSIONATE SCHOOLS



SAMHSA Award #6H79SM085077-01M001

Learning Objectives

- Understand and communicate the rationale for adopting trauma-informed approaches into schoolwide, multi-tiered systems of support.
- Identify the steps to school-wide implementation of trauma-informed multi-tiered systems of support (TI-MTSS).
- Apply the TI-MTSS framework to case studies and to their unique school/district scenarios.
- Synthesize the elements of TI-MTSS and implementation science to develop a roadmap for adopting trauma-informed, healing-centered approaches in their school/district.



Agreements
Grounding
Intentionality

Community Agreements

.....

- Be “whole body” present when things get difficult. “Tune in.”
- Speak your truth and respect the truth of others.
- Practice Mindful Listening.
“Notice the source and seeking”
- Practice being curious about assumptions, beliefs, and judgements.
- Respect the struggle. Value silence.
Appreciate each other.
- Keep stories sacred and share wisdom.

What
did you
come
here to
do?

p.1



COALITION FOR
COMPASSIONATE
SCHOOLS

Icebreaker: Four Corners

West Coast

Northeast

What region are you coming here from?

South

Midwest



Icebreaker: Four Corners

Nonprofit or Other			Traditional Public School
	What type of setting do you work in?		
Private or Parochial School			Charter, Magnet or Alternative School



Icebreaker: Four Corners

Other			Mental Health Professional in Schools
What is your primary role in your school/district/setting?			
School/ District Leadership			Academics, Culture or SEL Role



Trauma-Informed Schools

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

What does being trauma-informed mean?

A TRAUMA-INFORMED SCHOOL



Recognizes

Signs of trauma & needs for support

Realizes

Prevalence & impact of trauma

Responds

To promote individual & collective healing

**Resists
Retraumatization**

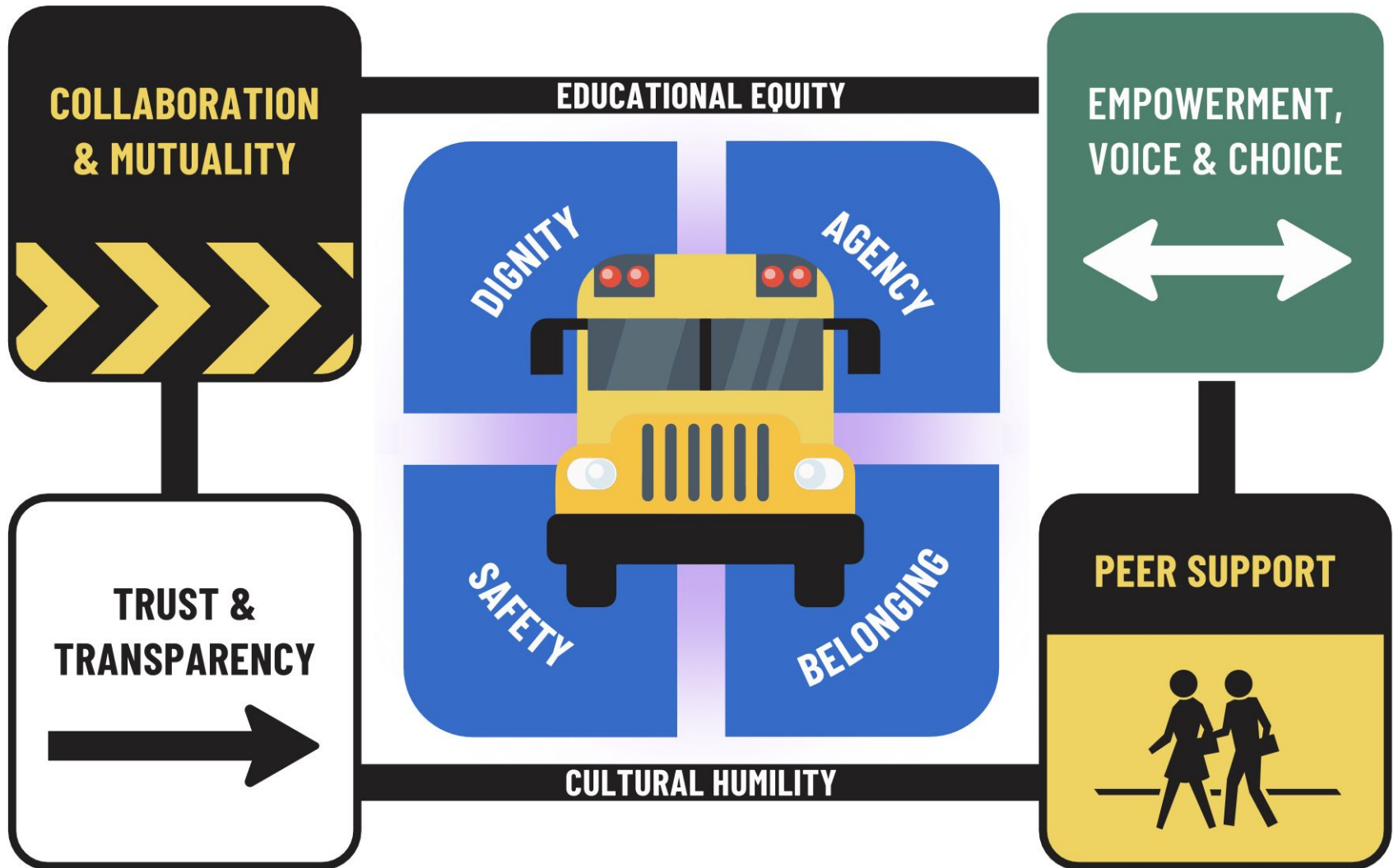
By using trauma-informed principles in the classroom, school community & teacher supports

(SAMHSA, 2014; 2023)

What is a Trauma-Informed School?



Six Principles + Core Human Needs



(McGlynn-Wright & Briner, 2021;
SAMHSA, 2014; 2023)

Implementing Trauma-Informed Schools

Multi-year process including...

- At Tier 1
 - All staff training and ongoing implementation support (such as coaching, champions) to impart knowledge, win over the hearts and minds, and modify the moment-to-moment, day-to-day behavior all adults in the school building
 - Leadership consultation to evaluate and modify the school's policies, practices, and procedures and address environmental issues
- At Tiers 2 and 3
 - Implementation of evidence-based trauma treatments for students who screen in for traumatic stress or psychological distress by trained school staff or through partnerships with community mental health



Trauma-Informed MTSS

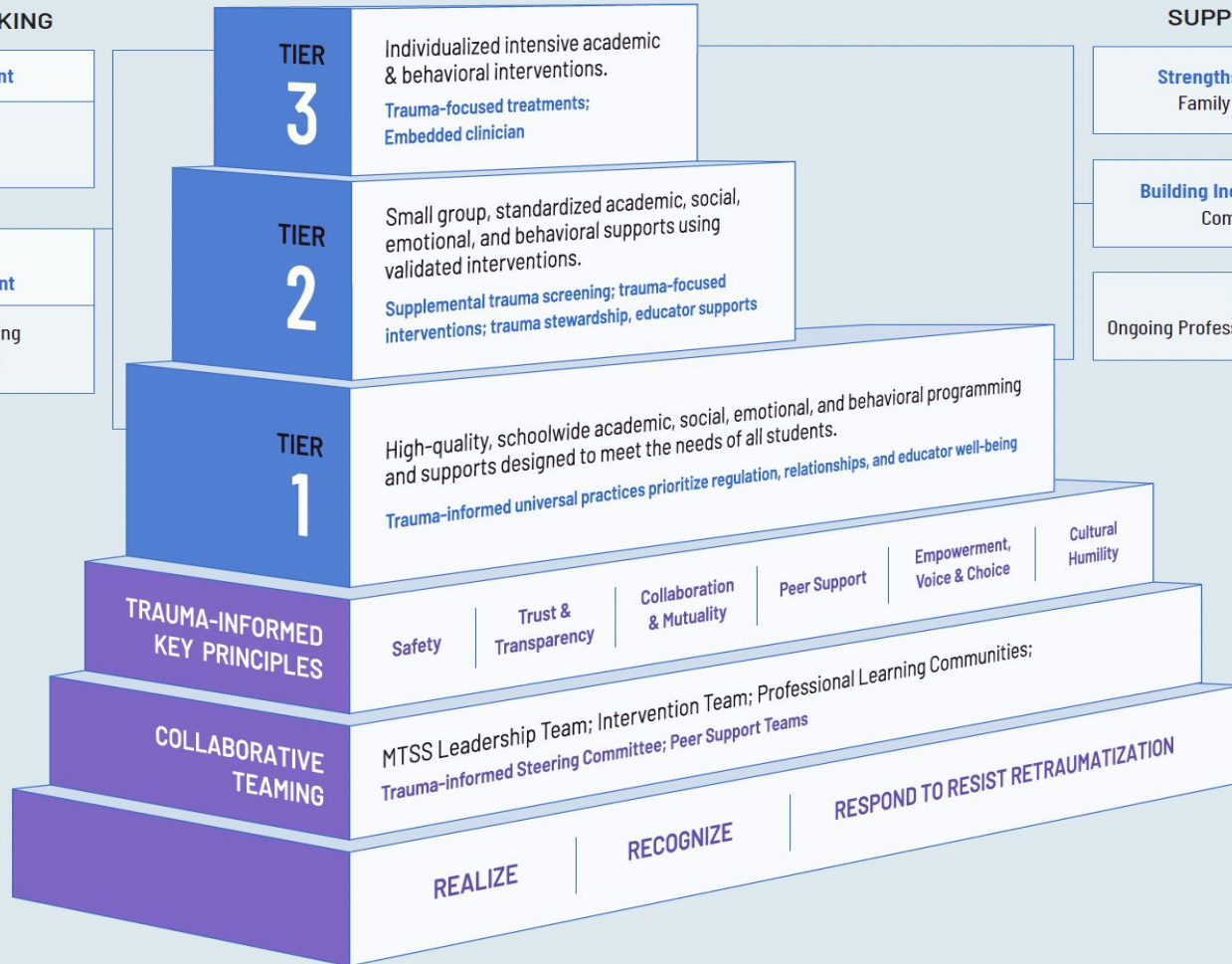
DATA-BASED DECISION MAKING

Trauma-Informed Needs Assessment

- ◆ Selecting Interventions & Guides for Movement Across Tiers

Trauma-Informed Procedures for Screening Differentiated Assessment

- ◆ Equity-Focused Progress Monitoring to Inform Fidelity & Effectiveness



SUPPORTING CAPACITY

Strengths-Based, Healing-Centered
Family & Student Engagement

Building Inclusive & Culturally-Relevant
Community Partnerships

Trauma-Informed
Ongoing Professional Development & Coaching

Emphases at Tier 1 within TI-MTSS

- Trauma-informed, healing-centered lens
- Emphasis on regulation and relationships
- Elevated attention to equity and disproportionality
- Attention to staff wellness including secondary traumatic stress
- Potential facilitator of evidence-based interventions for traumatic stress

Emphases at Tier 2 within TI-MTSS

- Educator supports-acknowledges impact of secondary traumatic stress
- Supplemental trauma screening for students
- Trauma-focused supports (individual and group interventions)



Emphases at Tier 3 within TI-MTSS

- Evidence-based trauma treatments
- Dedicated staff for treatment (school-based staff does not have capacity)
- Clearly defined referral pathway/process
- Delivered via an embedded partnership with a mental health agency delivering specialty-level care
- Intensive treatment services delivered flexibly and in response to the unique needs of students at each school
- Care delivered in collaboration with school personnel
- Advanced training, supervision, fidelity monitoring
- Intentional efforts and planning for caregiver involvement
- Ongoing feedback and quality improvement

(Connors et al., 2021;
Orengo-Aguayo et al. 2020)



WHAT IS TRAUMA

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

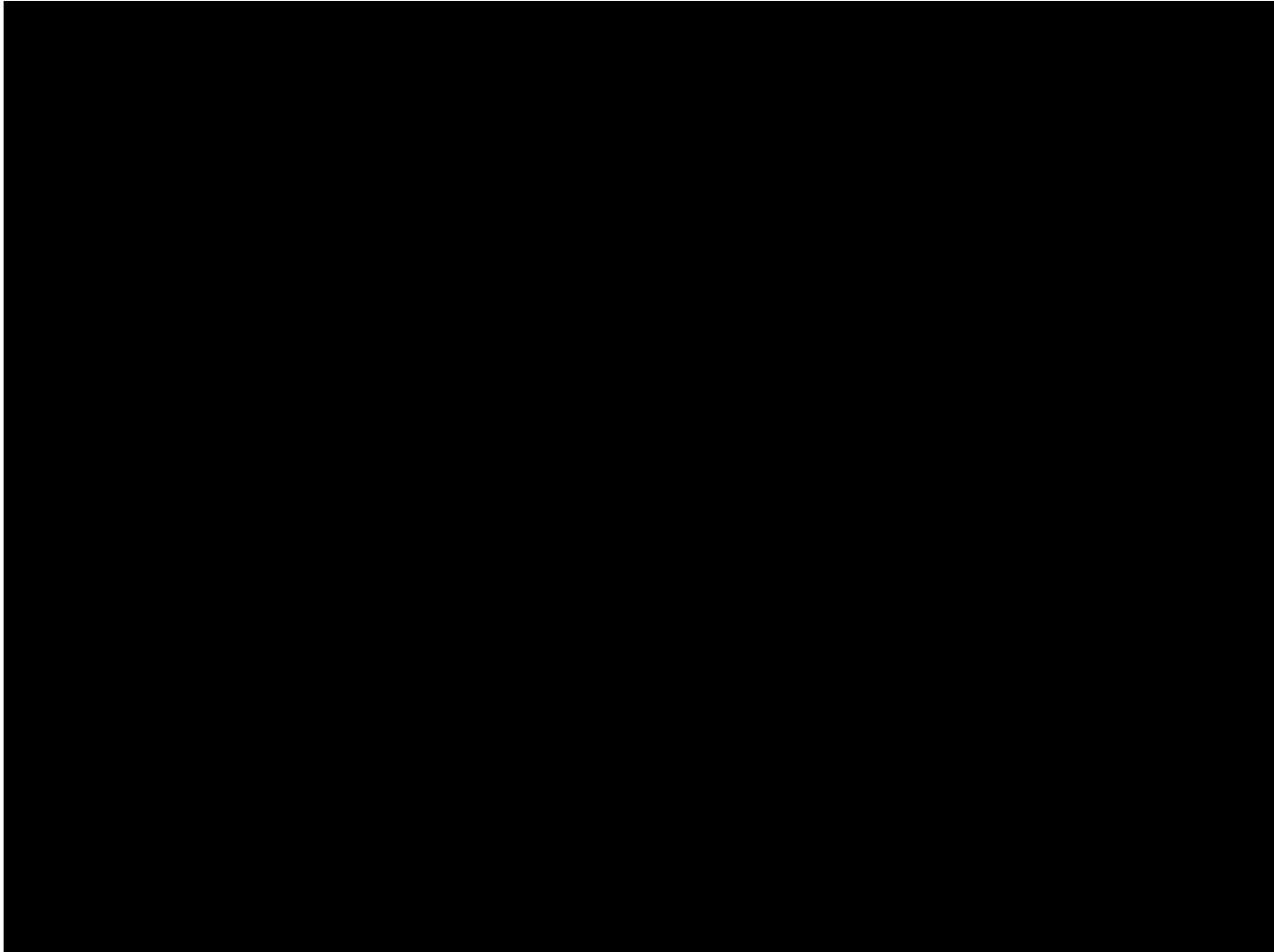
Overwhelms our ability
to **cope** with or **integrate**
our experience of
an event

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

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

(McGlynn-Wright & Briner, 2021)

How does trauma impact learning?



What's your pitch?



p.3

Imagine that you are in an MTSS meeting looking at academic and behavioral data with other members of the school leadership team. You know from your work that many students have experienced trauma since COVID-19 started. You want to pitch a trauma-informed initiative, but the meeting is about to end.

You've only got a couple of minutes to get everyone to understand how trauma shows up in schools and motivate the team to consider trauma-informed practices. How do you respond?

You will...

- Draft your pitch (5 mins)
- Partner 1 shares their pitch (2-3 mins)
- Partner 2 gives feedback (2 mins)
- Partner 2 shares their pitch (2-3 mins)
- Partner 1 gives feedback (2 mins)
- Reflect on the process and feedback (3 mins)

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
- Teacher and school capacity outcomes
- Student and school climate outcomes
- The pattern of most of the effects was to maintain and also usually improve over time (2-3 years)

(Overstreet & Baker, 2022;
McIntyre et al., 2019;
Wittich et al., 2020)

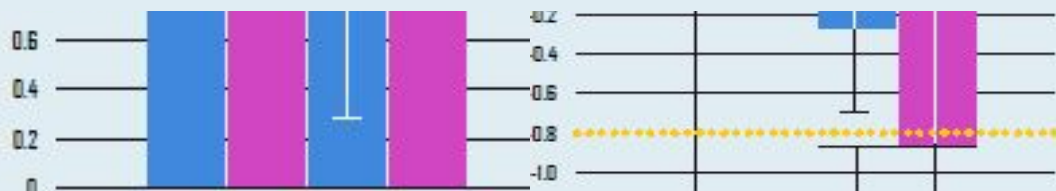
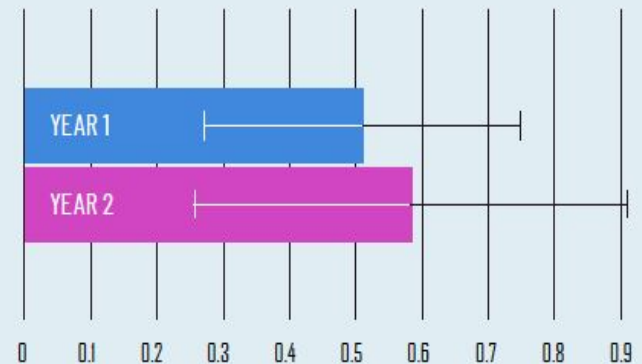
EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

3 STUDENT OUTCOMES
38

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY IMPACT

Educator responses on the Trauma-Sensitive Schools Checklist indicated significant improvements from baseline in schoolwide policies and practices that support trauma-informed approaches. For example, school staff reported shifts from baseline in:

- Discipline policies that balanced accountability with an understanding of trauma;
- Opportunities for professional development determined by their needs
- The availability of consultation with a trauma expert, classroom observations, and opportunities for team work.





Putting It Into Practice

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How do you build your own pilot?

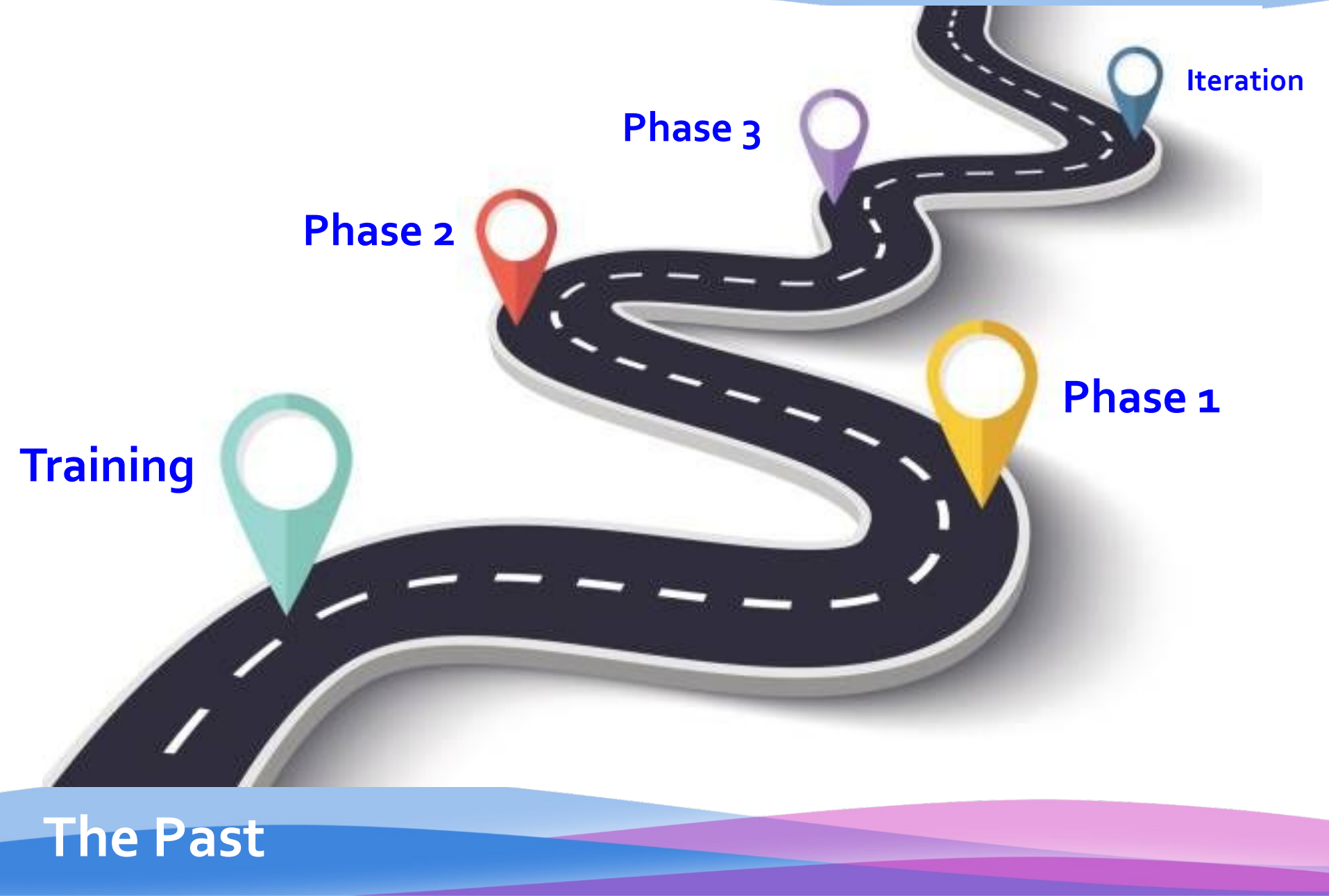
How Does Change Happen?



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

Key Points

- 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



Case Study Intro

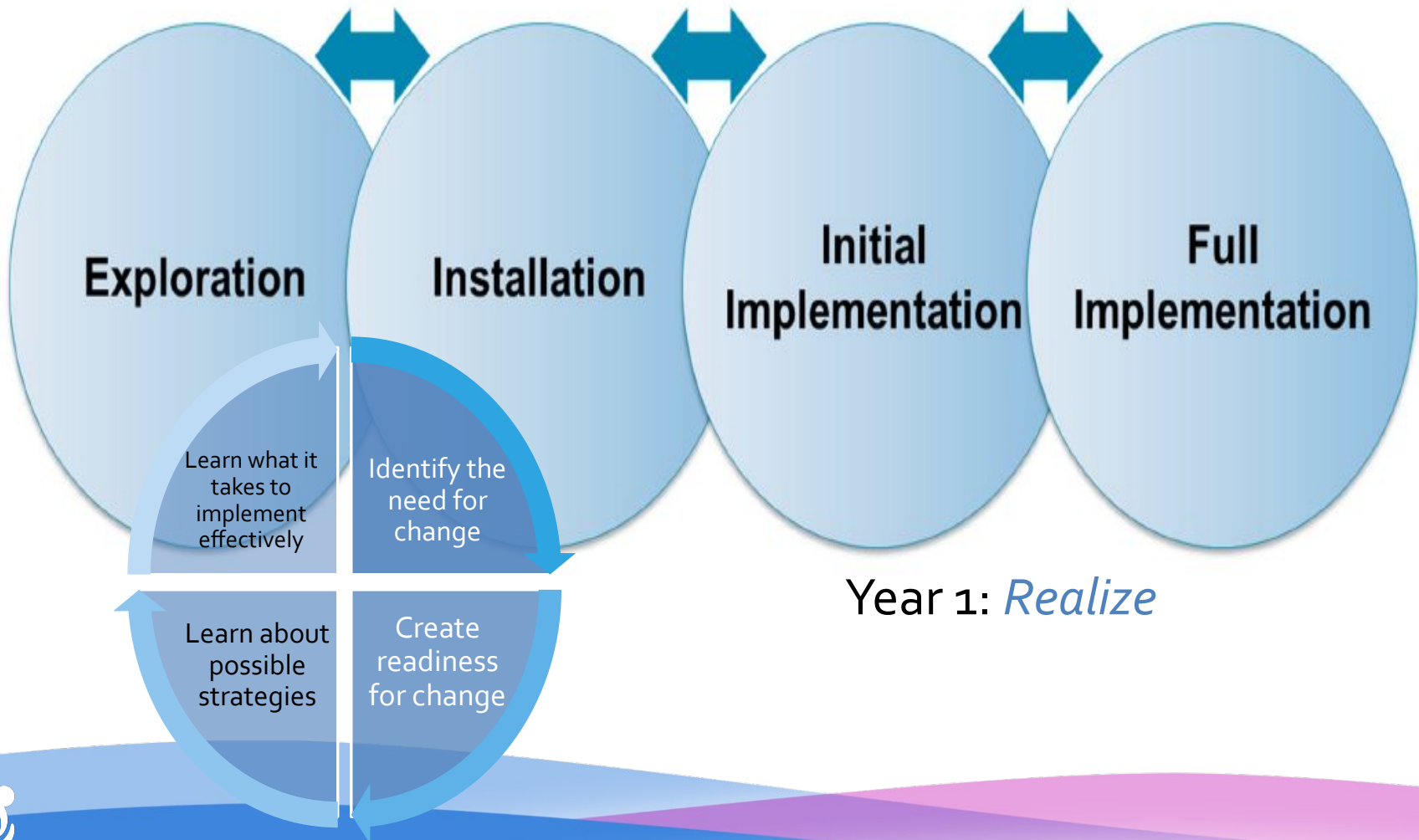
Since the return to in-person learning following the COVID-19 pandemic, Gulf South Elementary School (PK-8) has seen a greater population of the student body struggling with social-emotional skills. On any given day, multiple students experience persistent crying episodes, clinginess to personal objects such as stuffed animals or toys, and periodically, refusal to transition to other activities or leaving the room without permission.

Some students are easy to soothe, while others experience these outbursts over seemingly minor things. These outbursts are so extreme in some cases that students must be sent home because they cannot be deescalated. Teachers and support staff at the school are exasperated by trying to navigate support for students that lack consistent attendance, managing tantrums in the classroom, and feeling minimal support from administration and families. Parents have reported that, on some days, their children are missing school because their outbursts are so inconsolable that it is just easier to keep them home.

The school administration has been reviewing cultural and academic data in MTSS meetings across entire grade levels, and at a whole-school level. While the main focus has been on trying to keep students in class and learning, the leadership team has acknowledged a much more significant change in school culture data since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The school psychologist, Ava (she/her), serves as a member of the leadership team and brings up an article that she had read about the impacts of collective trauma on learning and how to support healing in schools. She proposes that the team reads the article and comes back prepared to talk about a trauma-informed and healing-centered social-emotional initiative for the school.

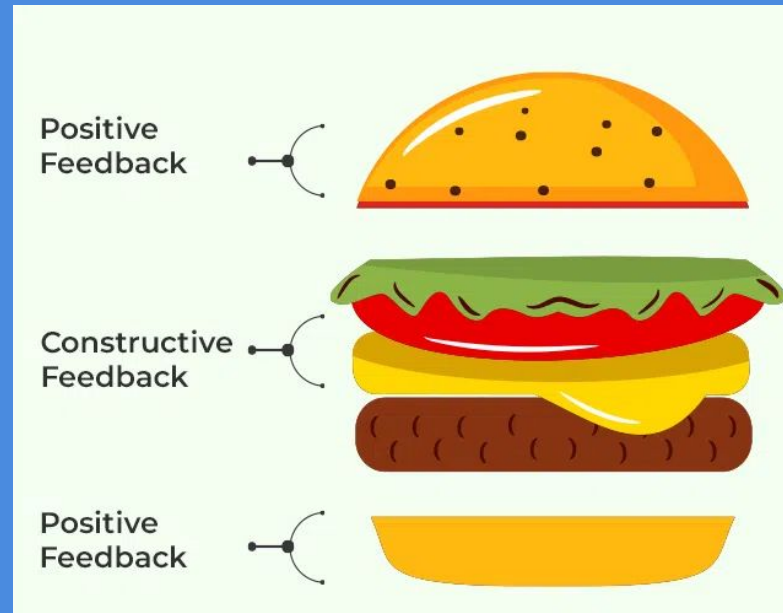


Implementation Stages



Phase 1: Rational Approach to Exploration

Step 1: Find the Bright Spots



Find the Bright Spots

Identify parts of the change that you are doing well to find transferable skills, build momentum, and spark trust that change is possible.

- Switch Framework, n.d.

p.5

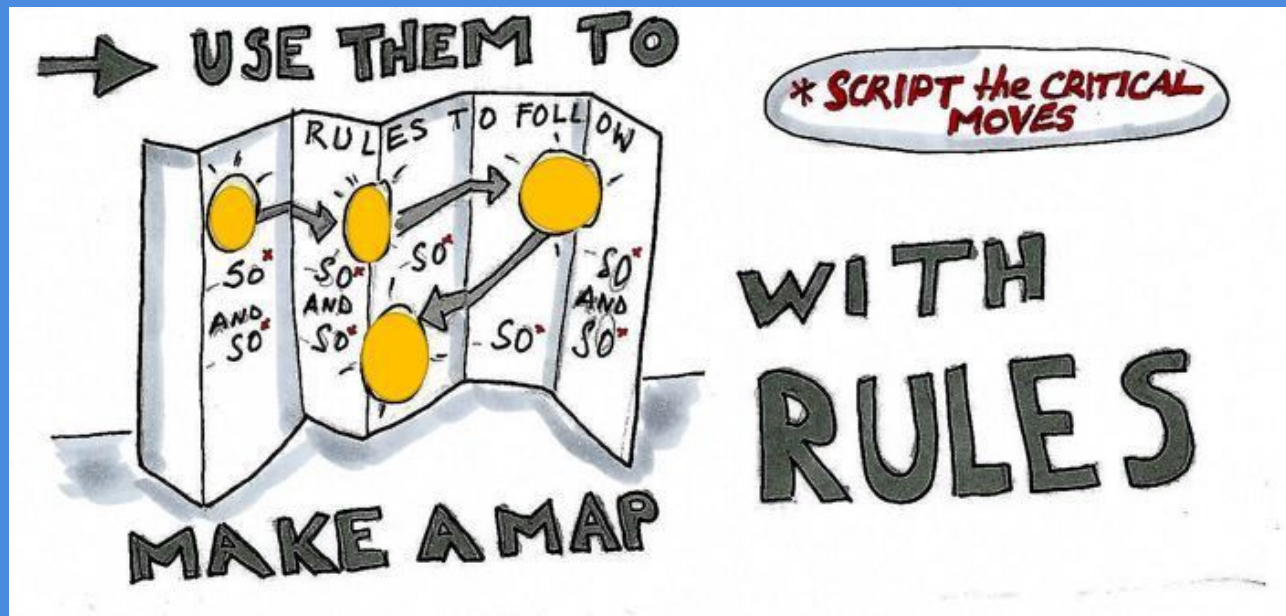
The Cultural Audit



bit.ly/cforcs-culturalaudit

Phase 1: Rational Approach to Exploration

Step 2: Script the Critical Moves



Script the Critical Moves

Remove ambiguity and over-thinking around potential action and define tangible/ concrete steps that can be taken toward the change.

- Switch Framework, n.d.

p.5

The Readiness Assessment



bit.ly/cforcs-readinesstool

(McGlynn-Wright et. al., 2021)

Phase 1: Rational Approach to Exploration

Step 3: Point to the Destination



Point to the Destination

Provide a compelling goal or destination that resonates with the rational and emotional centers of the brain. This provides the rider with clarity about where and how they will get there and shows the elephant why it is important to get there.

- Switch Framework, n.d.

p.5

Organizational Action Plan



bit.ly/cforcs-orgactionplan

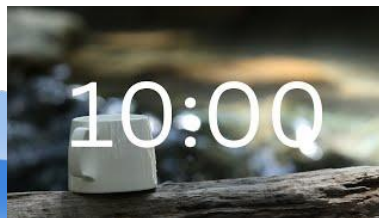
Practice with the Tools!

Apply these tools to your own practice:

- 1) Select one or two phase 1 tools from the folder (QR code/link to the right).
- 2) Identify
 - a) 3 ways this tool would be useful
 - b) 2 types of data you could collect
 - c) 1 question you have about it
- 3) (Optional) Complete your tool(s) from your point of view to see what insight you gain.



bit.ly/cforcs-sswaa-toolkit

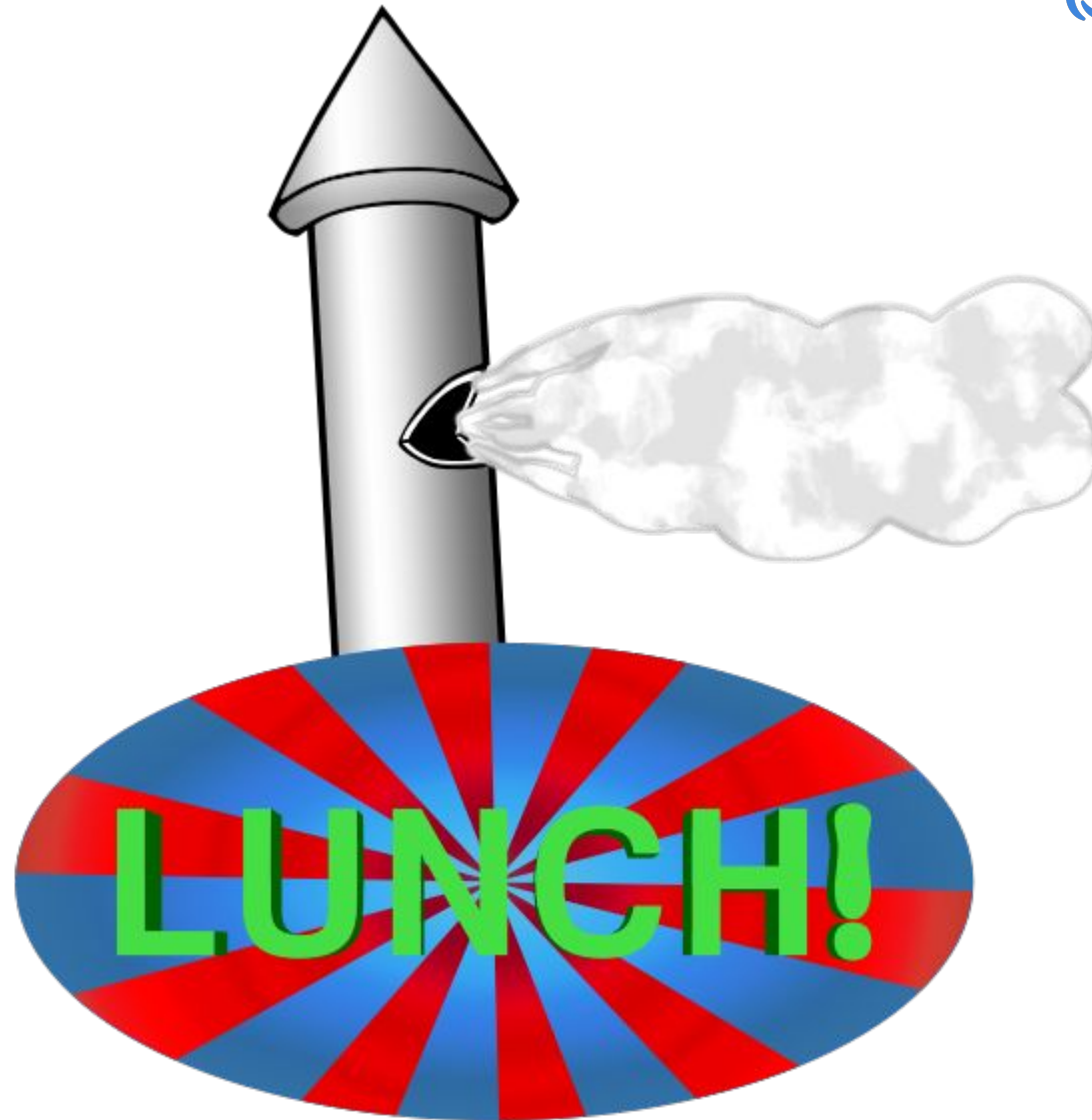


Case Study: Implementation Phase 1

1. Read Phase 1 of the Case Study.
2. Look for and discuss at your table:
 - a. What elements of Phase 1 are going well? What facilitators are making this possible?
 - b. What elements of Phase 1 could be improved? What barriers need to be addressed to move forward?
 - c. Where are there additional opportunities to find the bright spots, script the critical moves, and point to the destination?

p.6





Implementation Roadmap:

Phase 1

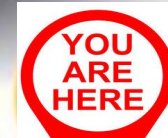
Phase 3

Iteration

What might
your phase 1
look like?

Phase 2

Phase 1



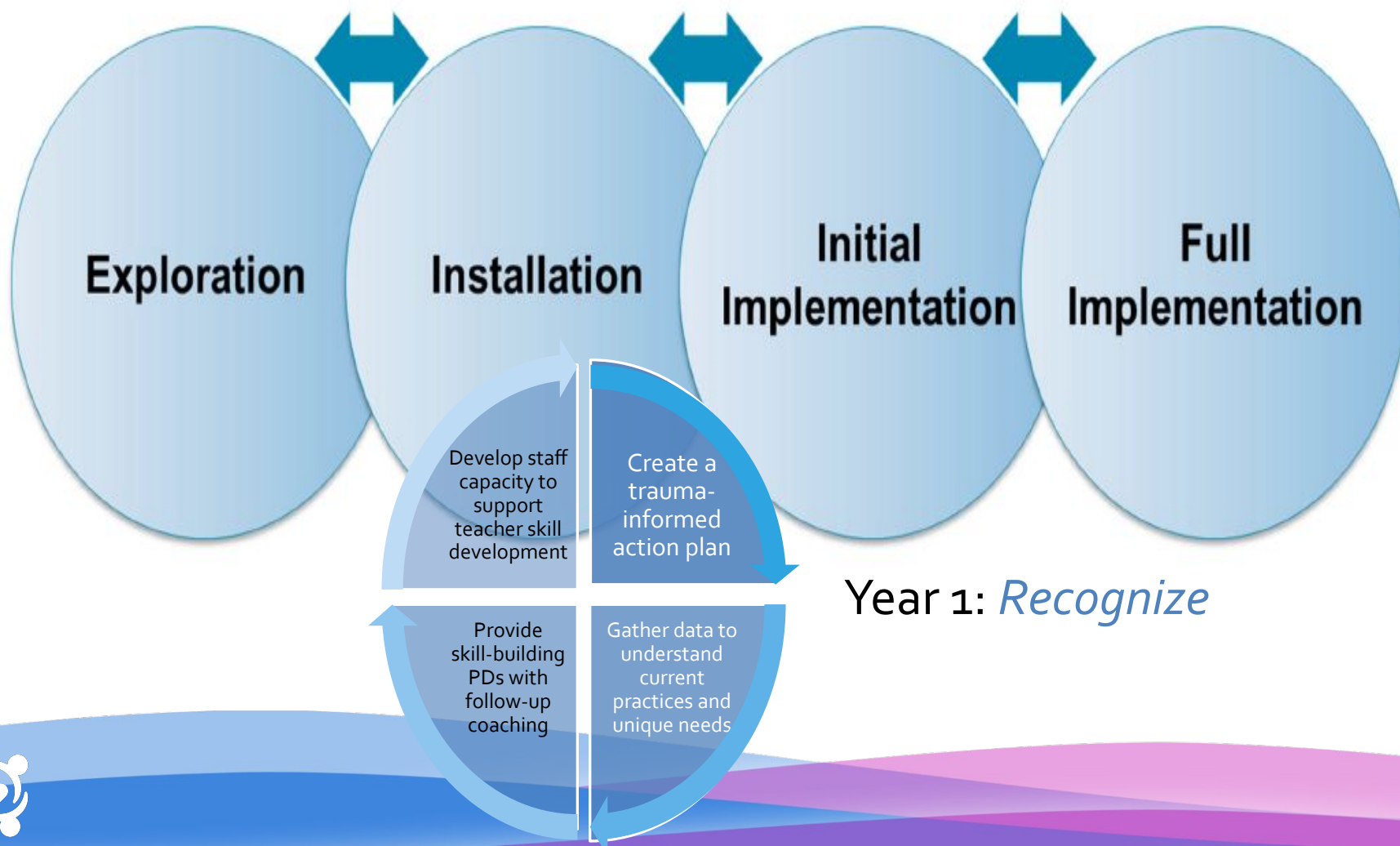
Implementation	Long-Term Ideas <i>What is the vision for trauma-informed MTSS at this phase? What will it look/sound/feel like when you are successful?</i>	Short-Term Ideas <i>What is the current context? What do <u>you</u> need throughout implementation as you consider making these shifts in your practice?</i>	Potential Barriers <i>What may get in the way of successful implementation? What would it take to overcome this barrier?</i>	Personnel <i>Who do you need to be in collaboration or partnership with? What will be expected of them?</i>	Next Steps <i>What are some steps you can take to lay the groundwork for this to be possible in the short and long term?</i>
Phase 1 <i>Script the Critical Moves</i> <i>Find the Bright Spots</i> <i>Point to the Destination</i>					

p.7

15:00



Implementation Stages



Phase 2: Emotional Support for Installation



Step 4: Teaming

What is “Teaming”?

- Teaming is the coordination and communication of people, often across disciplinary boundaries, to get interdependent work done.
- Establishing shared working habits that allow you to “team on the fly” fosters innovative and resilient culture requires:
 - Clarity and Dedication to a shared goal.
 - A felt sense of Psychological Safety- to speak up, admit error, ask for/offer help
 - Modeling curiosity and the ability to share areas of strength and limitations.

(Adapted from Edmondson, 2012).



Teaming Habits

- Creating structures of communication and data collection that allow your school community to learn together.
- Get the right people in the loop to inform analysis and planning efforts.
- Create flexible and responsive rituals, routines, and procedures that take care of your people and guide your work (ie relevant and clear agenda and accessible data).



ARTWORK: MOLLY COSTELLO



Phase 2: Emotional Support for Installation



Step 4: Find the Feeling

Find the Feeling

Tend to the emotional safety when communicating about change in order to open minds, inspire creativity, and hope.

- Switch Framework, n.d.

p.8

Walkthrough Checklist



bit.ly/cforcs-walkthrough

Phase 2: Emotional Support for Installation

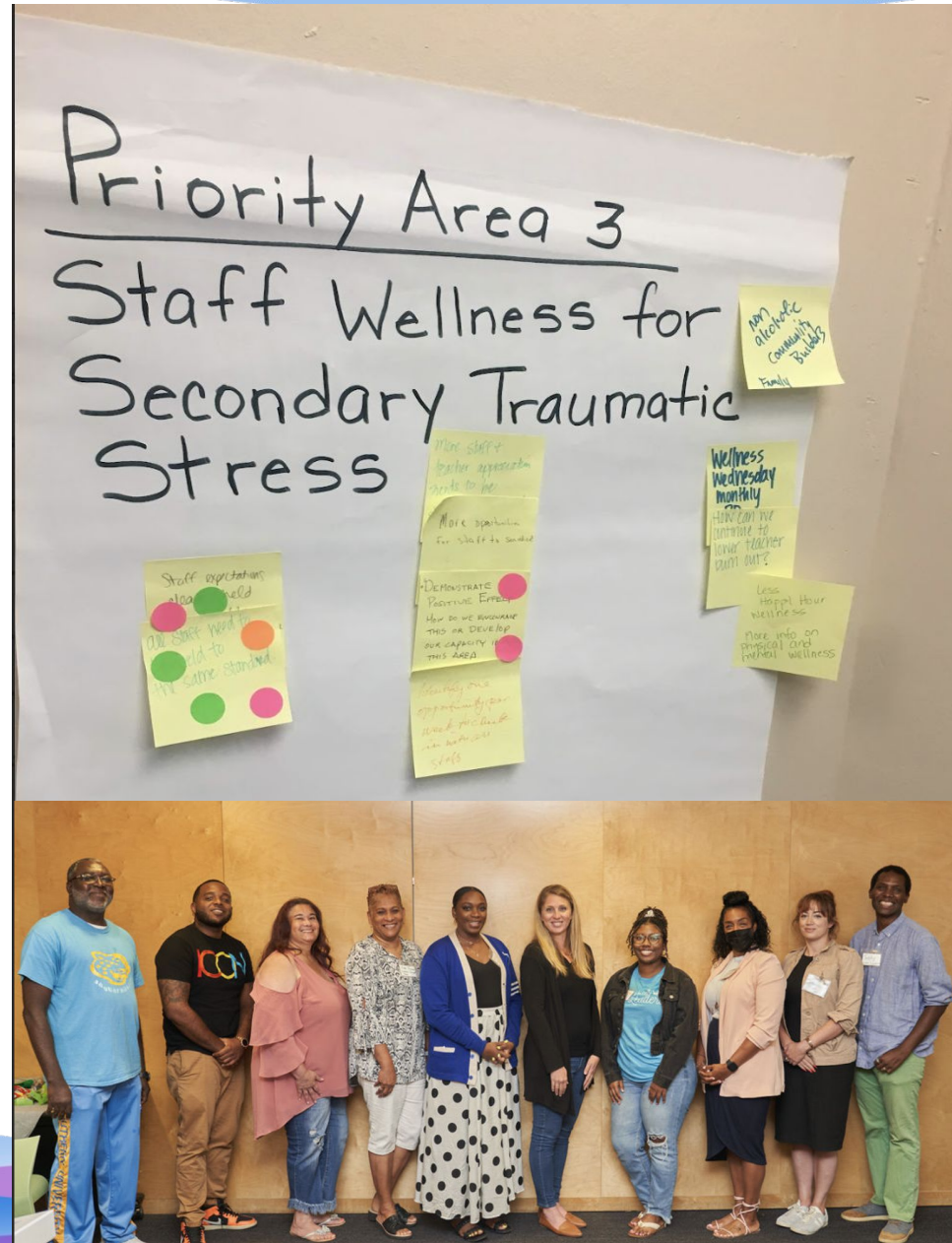
Decorative wavy lines in shades of purple and blue, flowing horizontally across the upper portion of the slide.

**Step 5:
Shrink the Change**

Shrink the Change

Strive to make change more attainable by breaking it into smaller pieces, highlight where the path to change is shorter/easier, you can celebrate the small wins on the path to something greater.

- Switch Framework, n.d.



Phase 2: Emotional Support for Installation



Step 6: Grow Your People

Grow Your People

Communicate the expectation of struggle and model and encourage a growth mindset and skill development.

- Switch Framework, n.d.



- Peer Support Team Community Agreements**
- How we will *be* together**
- Bring an openness to understanding & lack of judgement
 - Be honest
 - Respect time
 - Our focus is on our relationships
 - Talk directly to the person if harm/concern occurs
 - Give grace
- How we will *work* together**
- Communication
 - Advance notice of upcoming events and/or changes
 - Group text thread
 - Calendar invites with room #'s
 - Designate time for collaborative problem solving & peer consultation
 - Consider HW/Reading/Learning to happen during meetings
 - Different check-ins to connect & learn about each other
- Running Google Doc with**
- Agenda (KZ)
 - Notes (rotating scribe)



Practice with the Tools!

Apply these tools to your own practice:

- 1) Select one or two phase 2 tools from the folder (QR code/link to the right).
- 2) Identify
 - a) 3 ways this tool would be useful
 - b) 2 types of data you could collect
 - c) 1 question you have about it
- 3) (Optional) Complete your tool(s) from your point of view to see what insight you gain.



bit.ly/cforcs-sswaa-toolkit



Case Study: Implementation Phase 2

1. Read Phase 2 of the Case Study.
2. Look for and discuss at your table:
 - a. What elements of Phase 2 are going well? What facilitators are making this possible?
 - b. What elements of Phase 2 could be improved? What barriers need to be addressed to move forward?
 - c. Where are there additional opportunities to shrink the change, grow people, and find the feeling?

p.9



Implementation Roadmap:

Phase 2

Phase 3

Iteration

What might
your phase 2
look like?

Phase 2



Phase 1

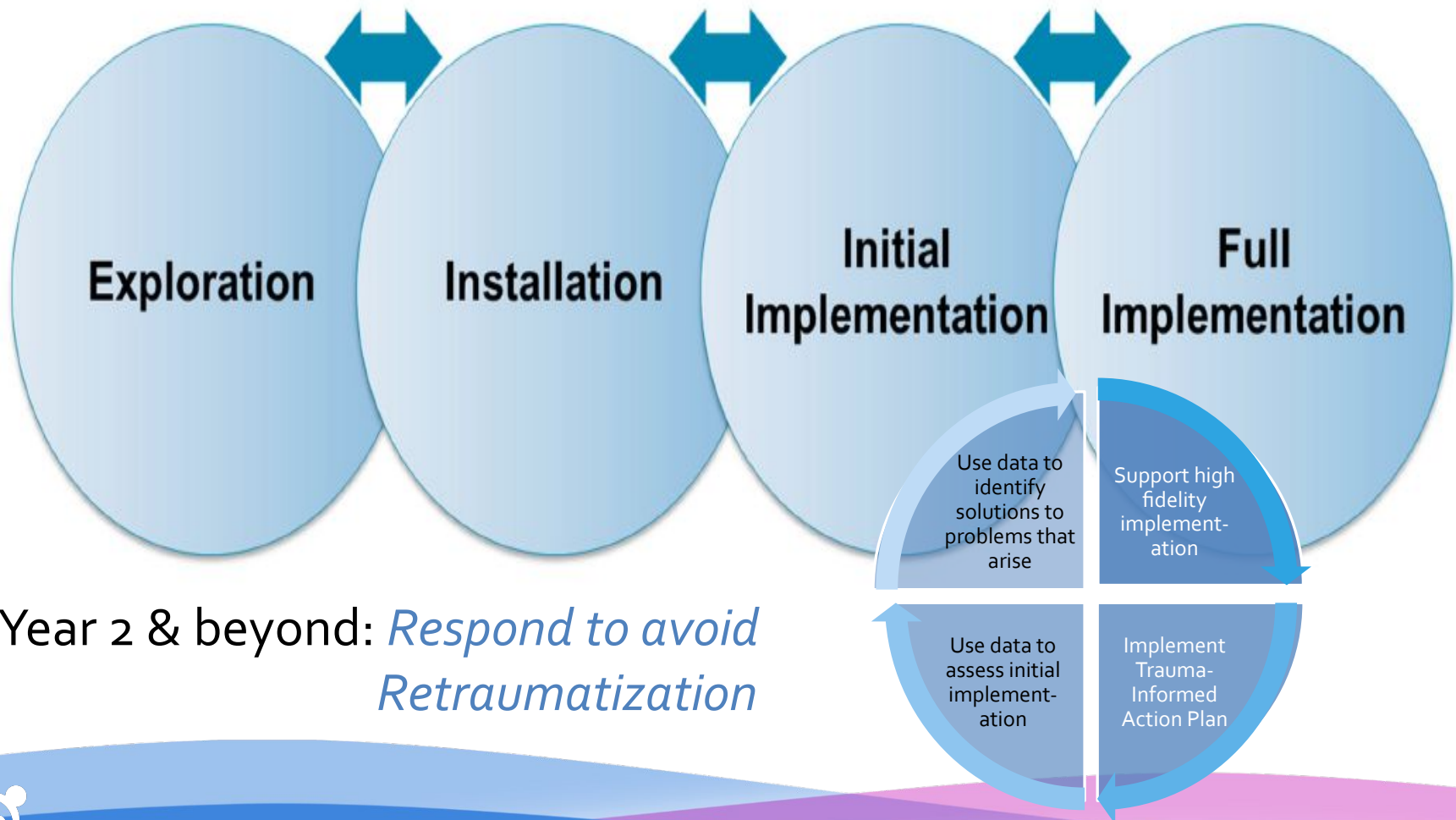
Implementation	Long-Term Ideas <i>What is the vision for trauma-informed MTSS at this phase? What will it look/sound/feel like when you are successful?</i>	Short-Term Ideas <i>What is the current context? What do <u>you</u> need throughout implementation as you consider making these shifts in your practice?</i>	Potential Barriers <i>What may get in the way of successful implementation? What would it take to overcome this barrier?</i>	Personnel <i>Who do you need to be in collaboration or partnership with? What will be expected of them?</i>	Next Steps <i>What are some steps you can take to lay the groundwork for this to be possible in the short and long term?</i>
Phase 2 <i>Shrink the Change Grow your People Find the Feeling</i>					

p.10

15:00



Implementation Stages



Phase 3: Environmental or Situational Factors for Implementation

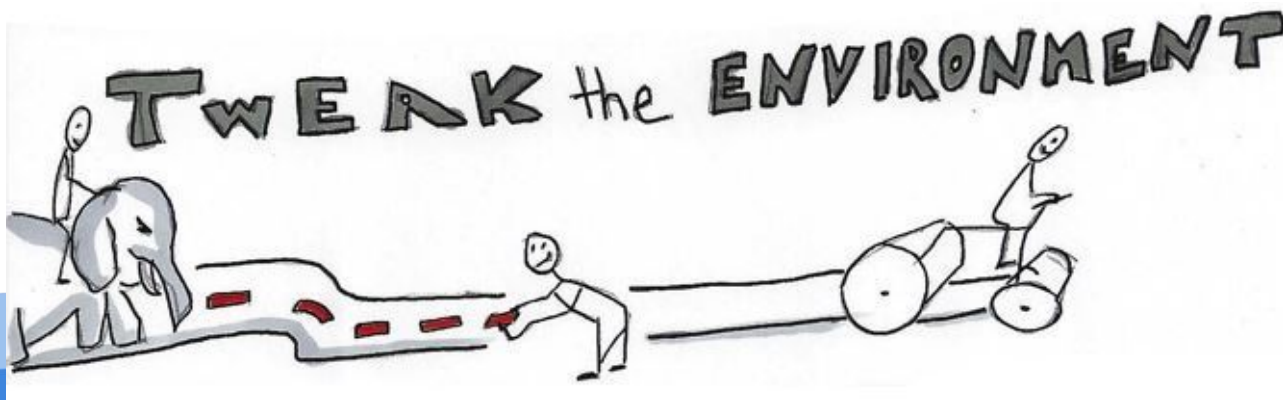
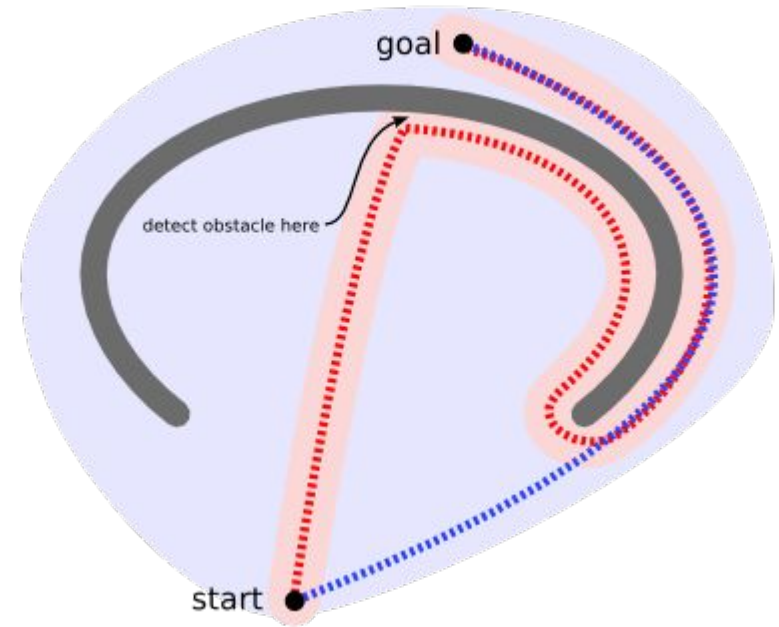


Step 7: Tweak the Environment

Tweak the Environment

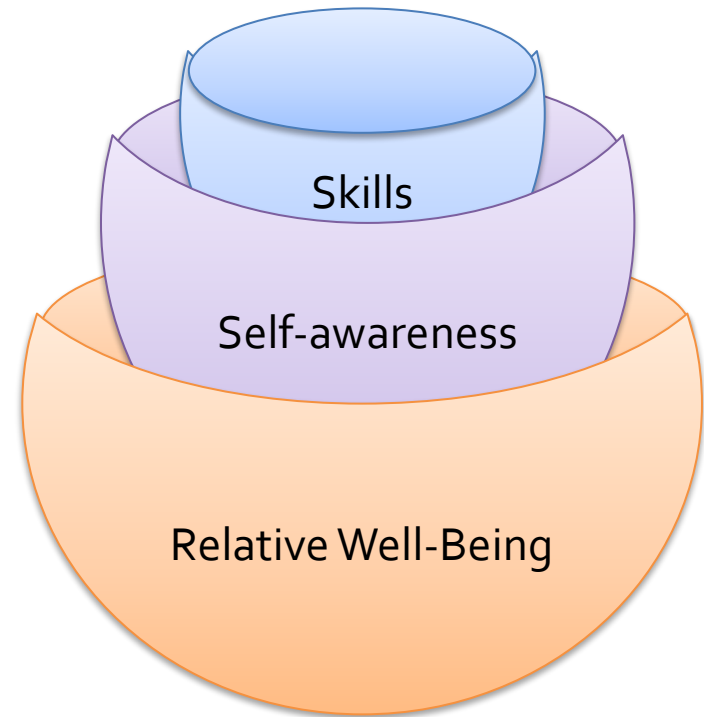
Look for ways to adjust the path to facilitate the desired changes rather than assume people don't want to make the change.

- Switch Framework, n.d.

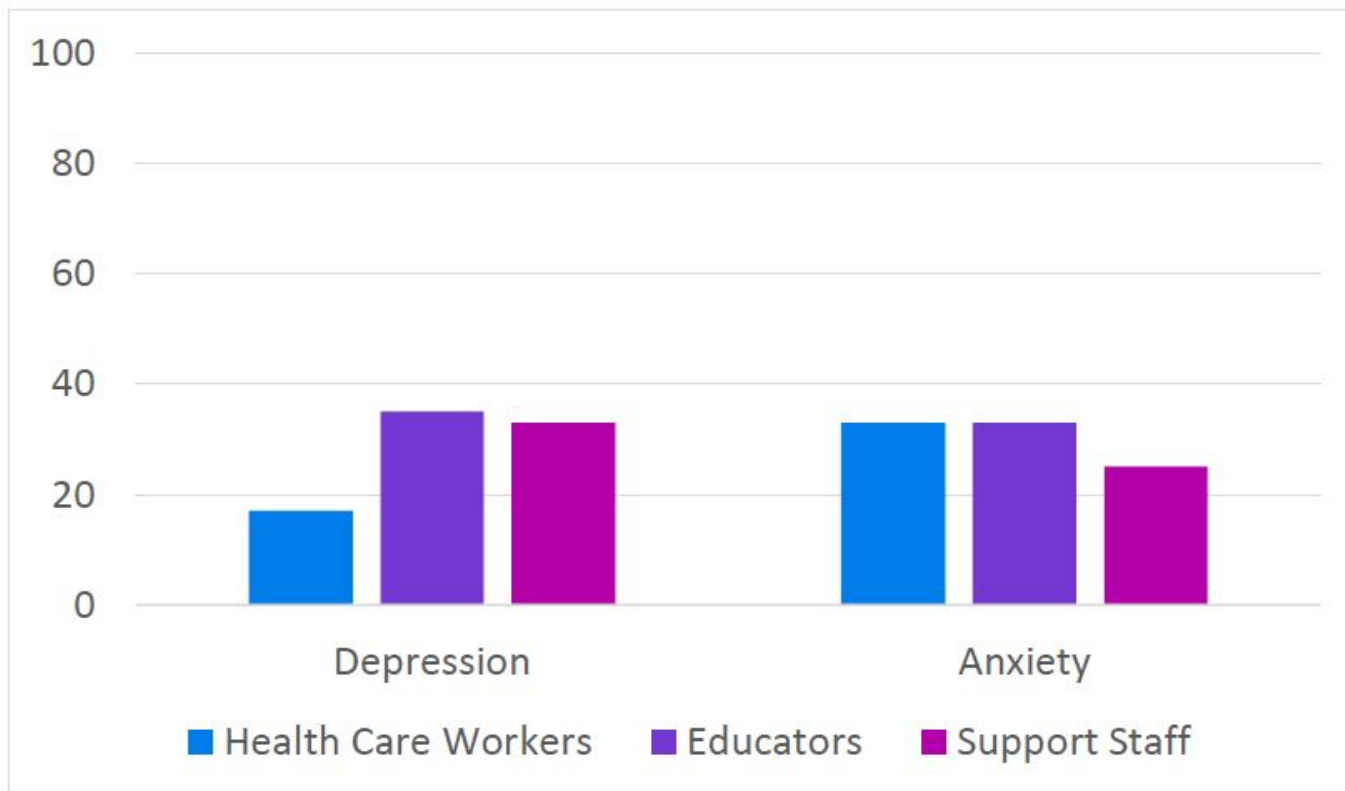


The Three Bowls

- The top is not the most important
- Each bowl is contained within the larger bowl below it
- It cannot expand beyond the bounds of the bowl below it.



Educator Mental Health



(Fleckman et. al, 2022)

Trauma Stewardship Practice Plan

Advanced Preparation

- Something you do before entering the situation (e.g., relaxation, mental rehearsal, seeking support)

In-the-Pocket Strategies

- Something you do in the situation (e.g., deep breathing, muscle relaxation)

Recovery Strategies

- Something you do after the situation (e.g., reaching out, taking down time, enjoyable activities)

Ongoing Self-Care

- Something you do purposefully to increase well-being and decrease stress (e.g., yoga, sports, me-time)



Phase 3: Environmental or Situational Factors for Implementation



Step 8: Build Habits

Find the Bright Spots

What norms, policies, roles, responsibilities will be added to codify how the change will develop over time?

- Switch Framework, n.d.

p.11

Policy Review Checklist



bit.ly/cforcs-policy-review

Practice with the Tools!

Apply these tools to your own practice:

- 1) Select one phase 3 tools from the folder (QR code/link to the right).
- 2) Identify
 - a) 3 ways this tool would be useful
 - b) 2 types of data you could collect
 - c) 1 question you have about it
- 3) (Optional) Complete your tool(s) from your point of view to see what insight you gain.



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Case Study: Implementation Phase 3

1. Read Phase 3 of the Case Study.
2. Look for and discuss at your table:
 - a. What elements of Phase 3 are going well? What facilitators are making this possible?
 - b. What elements of Phase 3 could be improved? What barriers need to be addressed to move forward?
 - c. Where are there additional opportunities to tweak the environment and build habits?



p.12



Implementation Roadmap:

Phase 3

Phase 3

Iteration

What might
your phase 3
look like?

Phase 2

Phase 1

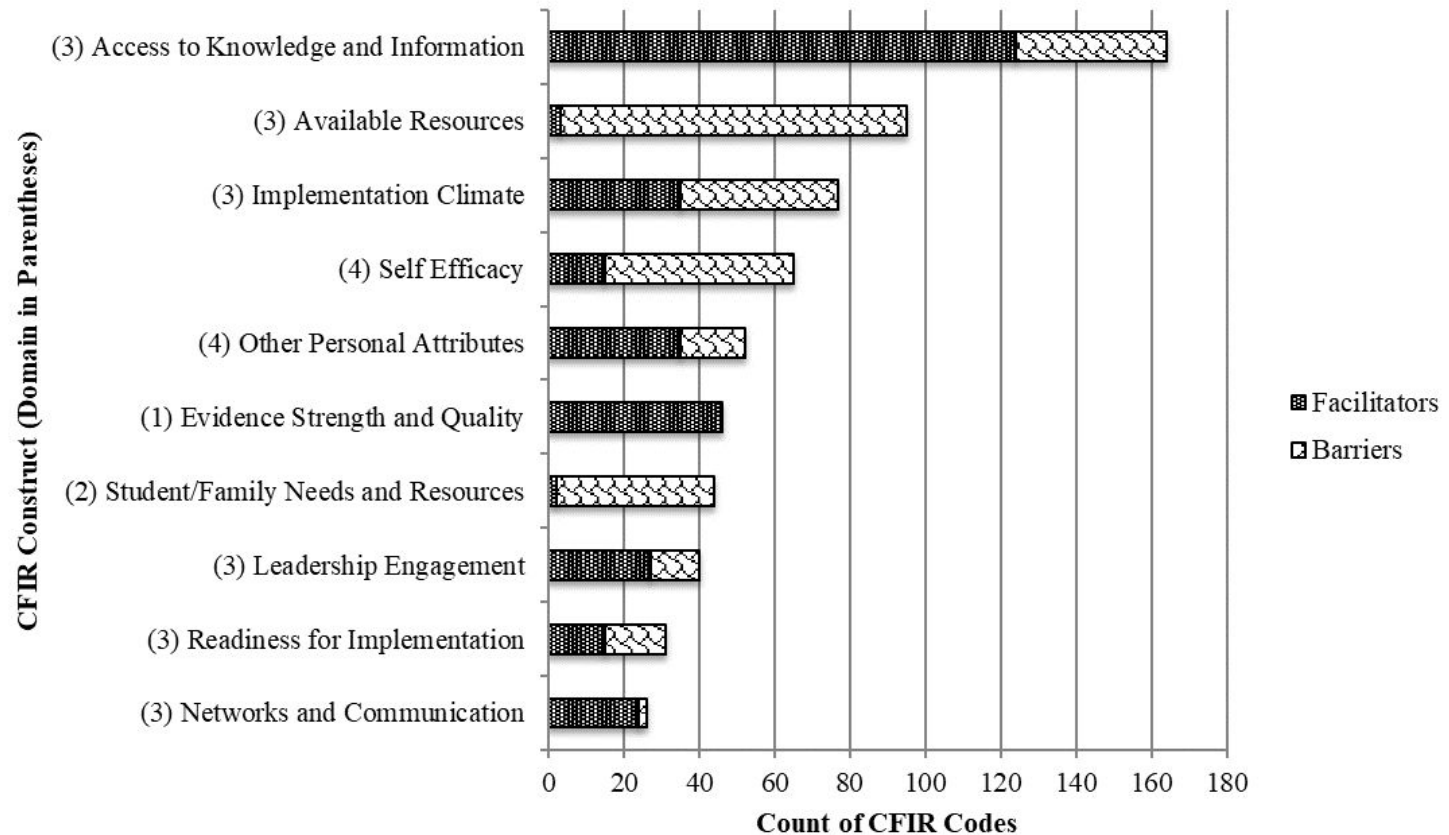


Implementation	Long-Term Ideas <i>What is the vision for trauma-informed MTSS at this phase? What will it look/sound/feel like when you are successful?</i>	Short-Term Ideas <i>What is the current context? What do <u>you</u> need throughout implementation as you consider making these shifts in your practice?</i>	Potential Barriers <i>What may get in the way of successful implementation? What would it take to overcome this barrier?</i>	Personnel <i>Who do you need to be in collaboration or partnership with? What will be expected of them?</i>	Next Steps <i>What are some steps you can take to lay the groundwork for this to be possible in the short and long term?</i>
Phase 3 <i>Tweak the Environment Build Habits</i>					

p.13



Facilitators and Barriers for Tier 1 Implementation



(Wittich et al., 2020)



Facilitators and Barriers for Tier 2 and 3 Implementation

- Staffing (school-based)
- Existing MTSS structures/comfort with data
- School administrator buy in
- Allocation of space and time for service delivery (indiv/groups)
- Acknowledgment that/planning for connection to care is an added duty for school-based staff
- Spirit of collaboration, curiosity, commitment to ongoing improvement
- Relationship between school-based mental health provider and school community at large
- School-agency consultation for individual and system support
- Agency-based staffing support and supervision



Funding Tier 2 and Tier 3 Services

- Funding in CCS schools is blended/braided
- Mix of local, state, and federal funding
- Medicaid alone does not cover the cost of evidence-based trauma treatment in schools; it also does not cover prevention-focused care
- Funding is different for each school partnership—complex administrative burden
- Economy of scale that comes with district-based funding and staffing is lost in a decentralized system
- Covid-related funding set to expire; what next?



Consultancy Protocol

Get feedback on a part of your implementation roadmap!

- **5 minutes:** Reflect independently on the 'pain points' in your implementation roadmap.
- **2 minutes:** Find 2 other people in the room you want to get feedback from.
 - Consider: Who did you meet in a similar region/type of school as you earlier?
- **3 minutes:** The first presenter shares their plan and pain point(s).
- **3 minutes:** The other 2 people discuss the problem without the presenter.
- **3 minutes:** Full group conversation
- **1 minute:** Presenter reflects on changes in their thinking.



Repeat the steps in purple until all group members have shared.





Key Takeaways - Our Lessons Learned

- Organizational readiness and administrative buy-in is key
 - This is a multi-year process that requires intentionality at each stage of implementation.
 - High concentration of poverty, stress, and trauma in schools reinforce need for the work but present challenges in implementation
 - Protecting professional development time and workforce capacity is critical to success but remains a challenge
 - Addressing the wellness needs of the workforce is important after shining a light on them during the all staff trainings
- 

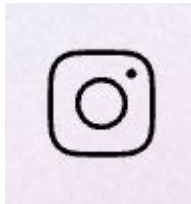
Key Takeaways - Our Lessons Learned

- Local schooling and staffing models in New Orleans schools look very different from national models—one size does not fit all schools
- Identify key stakeholders and changemakers early in the process
- Funding is highly variable
- Plan for sustainability and on-going capacity
- There is no such thing as perfection; commitment to learning together
- Educators and families need support in order to support youth



Thank you & Keep in Touch!

Follow us on social media, sign up for our newsletter, view our impact report, or visit Coalition Member websites all from the link/code below!



bit.ly/cforcslinktree



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References

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