1. Applying the Core Principles Worksheet

Trauma-sensitive schools are grounded in a set of core principles that inform daily school operations. Schools that embody these core principles: a) have staff who understand trauma and its impact; b) believe that healing happens in relationships; c) ensure emotional and physical safety for all; d) view students holistically; e) support choice, control, and empowerment for students, staff, and families; f) strive for cultural competence; and g) use a collaborative approach. Existing culture and practice across your school or district may already reflect these principles, or the core principles may represent a more significant shift.

Consider how you currently integrate the core principles into daily practice and what more can be done to support a trauma-sensitive learning environment.

1. Understand trauma and its impact.

In a trauma-sensitive school, all staff share a common understanding of trauma and its impact on students, families, and staff and a joint mission to create learning environments that acknowledge and address the effects of trauma on school success.

Here’s how my school currently integrates an awareness and understanding of trauma and its impact into daily practice:

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Here’s how I currently integrate an awareness and understanding of trauma and its impact into my daily work:

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Here’s what I think we can do more of:

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2. Believe that healing happens in relationships.

Trauma-sensitive schools believe that establishing safe, authentic, and positive relationships can be corrective and restorative to survivors of trauma and can be resilience-building for all. This principle encompasses relationships among and between school staff, students, and families.

Here’s how my school demonstrates a commitment to fostering healthy relationships:

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Here’s how I demonstrate my commitment to fostering healthy relationships:

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Here’s what I think we can do more of:

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3. Ensure emotional and physical safety.

Trauma-sensitive schools are committed to establishing a safe physical and emotional learning environment where basic needs are met; safety measures are in place; and staff responses are consistent, predictable, and respectful.

Here’s how my school upholds a commitment to ensuring emotional and physical safety

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Here’s how I uphold a commitment to ensuring emotional and physical safety:

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Here’s what I think we can do more of:

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4. View students holistically.

*Schools invested in taking a trauma-sensitive approach understand the interrelated nature of emotional and physical health and academic success and the need to view students holistically and build skills in all areas.*

Here’s how *my school* demonstrates a commitment to viewing students holistically:

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Here’s how *I* demonstrate my commitment to viewing students holistically:

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Here’s what *I* think we can do more of:

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5. Support choice, control, and empowerment for students, staff, and families.

*Trauma-sensitive schools operate in a way that supports choice, control, and empowerment for students, families, and staff and empowers all by building skills that enhance sense of mastery.*

Here’s how *my school* demonstrates a commitment to supporting choice, control, and empowerment for students, staff, and families:

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Here’s how *I* demonstrate my commitment to supporting choice, control, and empowerment for students, staff, and families:

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Here's what I think we can do more of:

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6. Strive for cultural competence.

Trauma-sensitive schools strive for cultural competence by acknowledging and respecting diversity within the school; considering the relationship between culture, traumatic experiences, safety, healing, and resilience; and using approaches that align with the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students, families, and the broader community.

Here’s how my school demonstrates a commitment to striving for cultural competence:

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Here’s how I demonstrate my commitment to striving for cultural competence:

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Here’s what I think we can do more of:

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7. Use a collaborative approach.

Trauma-sensitive schools use a collaborative approach with students, families, and staff. This approach includes sharing power and decision making across all levels of the school and seeing students and families as partners.

Here’s how my school demonstrates a commitment to using a collaborative approach with students, families, and staff:

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Here’s how I demonstrate my commitment to using a collaborative approach when working with students, families, and staff:

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Here’s what I think we can do more of:

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