

Trauma-Informed Care in Afterschool

A guide to implementing
trauma-informed care in your
out-of-school time program

ACTNOW!
Afterschool for Children and Teens

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THIS GUIDE?

ACT Now wrote this guide to help providers learn more about trauma-informed care and to assist in the planning and implementation of trauma-informed care in afterschool. In this guide we have provided background on trauma-informed care, tools for assessing your programs and training program staff, and some activities to engage students in this work.



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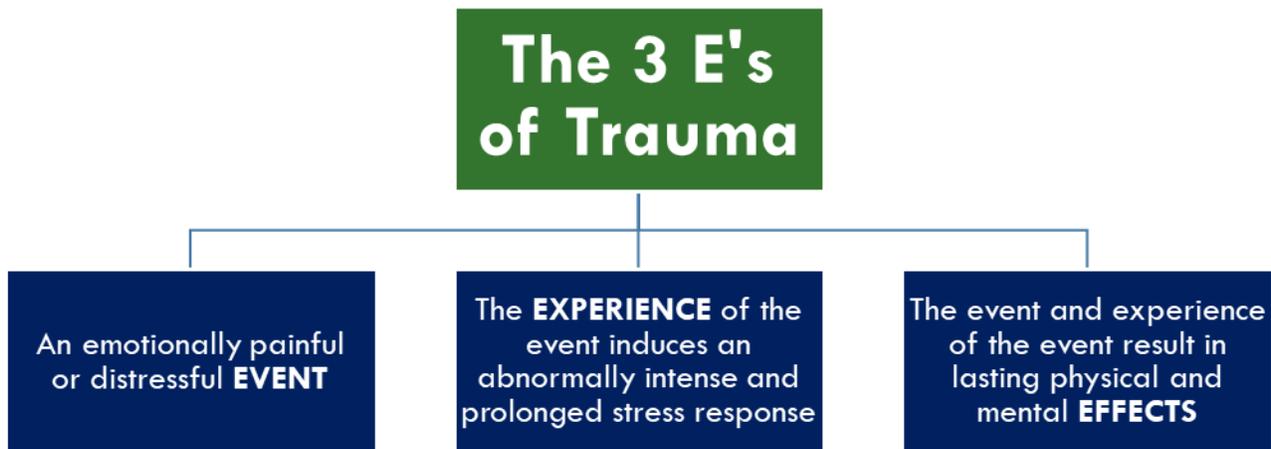
NOTE: *Hyperlinks are live and will send you directly to referenced resources if navigating this guide online. If you are accessing this guide via hard-copy, there are website URLs in the resource glossary.*

Trauma-Informed Care in Afterschool

Many afterschool programs feel challenged by the mental health needs of the students they serve and are looking to build skills in this area of their practice. Although afterschool programs cannot take the place of mental health professionals, their support can go a long way in serving the needs of the children in their program.

Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's development and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.¹

Trauma can be defined by the three E's:

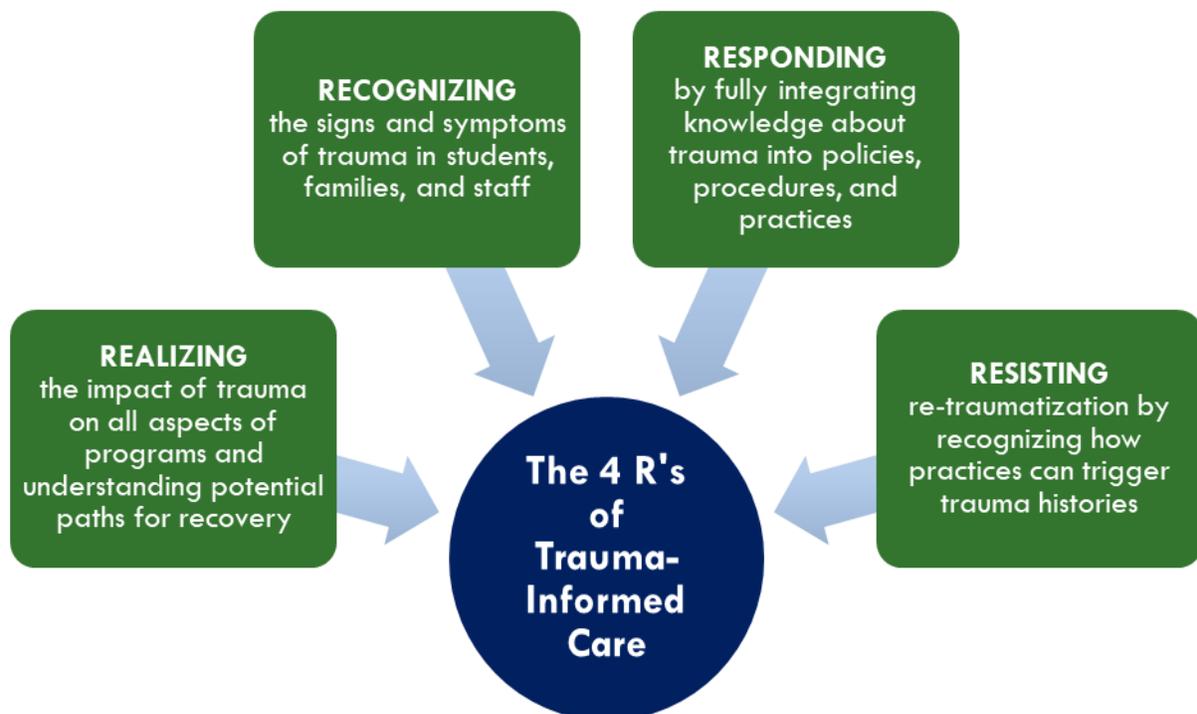


Traumatic events, or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), range from abuse (physical, psychological, and/or sexual) to violence (community, domestic, systemic, and/or combat related), to accidents or environmental disasters, to neglect.² The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), illuminates a strong link among trauma and health, mental health, substance use, and other social and behavioral difficulties in their [ACEs Pyramid](#).

In light of the increasing needs and depleting resources of low-income communities, and because the risks associated with poverty have a broad impact across multiple settings and domains of youths' functioning, new, innovative, and comprehensive models of mental health service delivery are required.³ Towards that end, afterschool programs represent a critically underutilized setting uniquely positioned to promote mental health for children living in poverty.⁴ As stated above, afterschool programs do not take the place of mental health professionals, but work in conjunction with mental health providers to support and provide programming that is sensitive to the needs of survivors of trauma.

Further, afterschool programs have the potential to help families connect and gain access to the resources offered in their communities to assist in serving families' mental health needs. Mental health can often be a stigmatized term. Afterschool programs can provide a space that disrupts the stigmatization of behavioral and mental health services. By engaging in community partnerships and developing afterschool programs that focus on mental health, students can receive more comprehensive services.

Programs can become more responsive to trauma by following the four R's:



Elements of Trauma-Informed Care

Trauma-informed care promotes environments of healing and recovery. This section provides some background information on trauma-informed care and how to plan for implementation of these practices in your program.

To create a trauma-informed environment, programs must include the following principles:⁵

Safety:

Ensure physical and emotional safety

Trustworthiness:

Maximize trustworthiness by making tasks clear and maintaining appropriate boundaries

Choice:

Prioritize consumer choice and control

Collaboration:

Maximize the sharing of power and decision-making with youth

Empowerment:

Prioritize youth empowerment and skill building

Trauma-informed services are designed to be welcoming and hospitable for all individuals while avoiding re-traumatization. According to the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), trauma-specific intervention programs generally recognize the following:⁶

The survivors need to be respected, informed, connected, and hopeful regarding their own recovery

The interrelation between trauma and symptoms of trauma such as substance abuse, eating disorders, depression, and anxiety

The need to work in a collaborative way with survivors, family, friends, and other human services agencies in a manner that will empower survivors

Self-Assessment & Planning

Once programs decide that they want to follow a trauma-informed approach, planning and collecting data is an effective way to help determine steps to take in implementing this approach. Afterschool programs can use the following tools to assess the quality of and plan for trauma-informed practices at the organizational level. Programs can use these tools to evaluate and improve overall program quality for youth with trauma or behavioral health needs.

NAME	ORGANIZATION/AUTHOR	DESCRIPTION
<u>Creating Cultures of Trauma Informed Care</u>	Roger D. Falot, Ph.D. and Maxine Harris, Ph.D. Community Connections	A self-assessment and planning protocol to help facilitate trauma-informed modifications to service systems
<u>Agency Self-Assessment for Trauma-Informed Care</u>	Trauma Informed Care Project	A tool to help agencies assess their readiness to implement a trauma-informed approach
<u>Trauma-Informed Care Organizational Self-Assessment Tool</u>	Coordinated Care Services Inc.	A tool to measure trauma-informed practices of human services agencies, mental and healthcare organizations, and community-based organizations
<u>Trauma Responsive School Implementation Assessment</u>	Center for School Mental Health	Self-assessment developed for schools looking to become trauma responsive
<u>System of Care Trauma-Informed Agency Assessment</u>	Thrive	In depth validated data-collection tool designed to identify areas of strength and pinpoint areas for improving trauma-informed service for youth and families
<u>Trauma-Responsive System Implementation Advisor</u>	EPower and Associates	A self-assessment toolkit to help organizations learn about trauma-informed care, assess their progress, and create a plan for improvement

Professional Development

It is important that supervisors support staff with the training necessary to implement these practices. The following are resources to assist in supporting your staff's professional development in trauma-informed care.

TYPE	NAME	ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION	FEE
Webinars	Tools for Transformation: Becoming Accessible, Culturally Responsive, and Trauma Informed Organization	National Center on Domestic Violence	A 2018 webinar series that offers strategies, tools, and resources to help facilitate trauma-informed practices along with other archived webinars on trauma informed strategies	Free
Webinars	Trauma-Informed Care National Council Webinars	National Council for Behavioral Health	Archived webinars that discuss trauma-informed topics, such as trauma-sensitive schools, mental health first aid, organization assessment, and mobilizing community support	Free
In-Person Trainings & Webinars	Capacity Building	Illinois Collaboration on Youth	Culturally sensitive, developmentally appropriate, best-practice-based trainings, technical assistance, and other valuable support to organizations in Illinois serving children, youth, and families	Fee-based consulting and trainings, and free trainings for DHS providers
Training Facilitator Guide	Trauma Training for Educators	Communities In Schools Central Texas	Free training resource designed to give anyone who works with children with trauma focused information about how trauma affects student learning and how to help students develop a greater sense of safety and emotional regulation skills (include facilitators guide and handouts)	Free
Online Training	Trauma-Sensitive Schools Training Package	National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments	Online training modules to help educators learn about, implement, and sustain trauma-informed practices	Free

Working with survivors of trauma can also be extremely draining for program staff and can even lead to secondary trauma or compassion fatigue. The [Professional Quality of Life \(ProQOL\)](#) tool helps to assess quality of life for staff in order to plan for a better work-life balance.

Other Resources & Activities

It is important to start with planning, assessment, and training to ensure a strong foundation for trauma-informed care implementation. To supplement this work, the following are FREE resources and activities to engage students in trauma-informed skills and strategies.

TYPE	NAME	ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION
Activities	Exercises for Grounding, Emotional Regulation, and Relaxation for Children and their Parents	National Center for Domestic Violence	A series of exercises to support students experiencing trauma that can be performed at home or in programs
Activities	Fingerhold Practice for Managing Emotions & Stress	National Center for Domestic Violence	A variety of different practices to assist youth experiencing overwhelming emotions, sensations, or trauma responses
Lesson Plans	Trauma-Informed Yoga Lesson Plans	YogaEd	Lesson plan designed to help students build self-awareness and self-regulation and empower them with yoga tools
Activities	Trauma-Informed Children's Activities	Child Advocates of Silicon Valley	A series of activities divided by age group to help youth develop skills related to expressing feelings, coping, relaxation, and empowerment
Activities	Classroom Activities	TeachTrauma	Resources and activities for discussing and exploring trauma with students
Best Practices	Treatment Improvement Protocols (TIPs)	SAMHSA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	Evidence-based approaches and protocols for programs to implement to prevent substance abuse and mental health disorders
Toolkit	Trauma-Informed Organizational Toolkit	American Institutes for Research	A roadmap for becoming trauma-informed that offers concrete guidelines so that organizations can assess if they are responding appropriately to the needs of families who have experienced traumatic stress

References

1. Abuse, S. (2014). *SAMHSA's concept of trauma and guidance for a trauma-informed approach*. Retrieved from <http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/resources/SAMHSA%20TIC.pdf>.
2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2018). *Adverse child experiences*. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/capt/practicing-effective-prevention/prevention-behavioral-health/adverse-childhood-experiences>.
3. Atkins, M.S., Cappella, E., & Frazier, S.L. (2007). Linking mental health and after school systems for children in urban poverty: preventing problems, promoting possibilities. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 34(4), 3 & 390.
4. Atkins, M.S., Frazier, S.L., Hur, K.B., Mehta, T.G. & Rusch, D. (2012). Not just a walk in the park: Efficacy to effectiveness for after school programs in communities of concentrated urban poverty. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 40, 407.
5. Fallot, R.D. & Harris, M. (2011). Creating cultures of trauma-informed care (CCTIC): A self-assessment and planning protocol. *Community Connections*, 6-9.
6. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2018.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). *SAMHSA's concept of trauma and guidance for a trauma-informed approach*. Retrieved from <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4884.pdf>.
9. Fallot & Harris, 2011.

GLOSSARY OF RESOURCE LINKS

TOOL	DESCRIPTION	LINK
<u>Creating Cultures of Trauma Informed Care</u>	A self-assessment and planning protocol to help facilitate trauma-informed modifications to service systems	https://children.wi.gov/Documents/CCTICSelf-AssessmentandPlanningProtocol0709.pdf
<u>Agency Self-Assessment for Trauma-Informed Care</u>	A tool to help agencies assess their readiness to implement a trauma-informed approach	http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/resources/Traumam%20Informed%20Organizational%20Survey_9_13.pdf
<u>Trauma-Informed Care Organizational Self-Assessment Tool</u>	A tool to measure trauma-informed practices of human services agencies, mental and healthcare organizations, and community-based organizations	https://ticosat.ccsi.org/Landing
<u>Trauma Responsive School Implementation Assessment</u>	Self-assessment developed for schools looking to become trauma responsive	https://traumaawareschools.org/traumaResponsiveSchools
<u>System of Care Trauma-Informed Agency Assessment</u>	In depth validated data-collection tool designed to identify areas of strength and pinpoint areas for improving trauma-informed service for youth and families	http://traumatransformed.org/wp-content/uploads/tia_thrive.pdf
<u>Trauma-Responsive System Implementation Advisor</u>	A self-assessment toolkit to help organizations learn about trauma-informed care, assess their progress, and create a plan for improvement	https://vawnet.org/material/trauma-responsive-system-implementation-advisor-tresia
<u>Tools for Transformation: Becoming A...Trauma Informed Organization</u>	A 2018 webinar series that offers strategies, tools, and resources to help facilitate trauma-informed practices along with other archived webinars on trauma informed strategies	http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/trainingta/webinars-seminars/
<u>Trauma-Informed Care National Council Webinars</u>	Archived webinars that discuss trauma-informed topics, such as trauma-sensitive schools, mental health first aid, organization assessment, and mobilizing community support	https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/areas-of-expertise/trauma-informed-behavioral-healthcare/
<u>Capacity Building</u>	Culturally sensitive, developmentally appropriate, best-practice-based trainings, technical assistance, and other valuable support to organizations in Illinois serving children, youth, and families	https://www.icoyouth.org/capacity-building/training
<u>Trauma Training for Educators</u>	Free training resource designed to give anyone who works with children with trauma focused information about how trauma affects student learning and how to help students develop a greater sense of safety and emotional regulation skills	https://ciscentraltexas.org/resources/traumatraining/

GLOSSARY OF RESOURCE LINKS

TOOL	DESCRIPTION	LINK
Trauma-Sensitive Schools Training Package	Online training modules to help educators learn about, implement, and sustain trauma-informed practices	http://airhsdlearning.airws.org/leading-trauma-sensitive-schools
Exercises for Grounding, Emotional Regulation, & Relaxation for Children and their Parents	A series of exercises to support students experiencing trauma that can be performed at home or in programs	http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Exercises-for-Grounding-Emotional-Regulation-Relaxation-Final.pdf
Exercises for Grounding, Emotional Regulation, & Relaxation for Children and their Parents	A series of exercises to support students experiencing trauma that can be performed at home or in programs	http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Exercises-for-Grounding-Emotional-Regulation-Relaxation-Final.pdf
Exercises for Grounding, Emotional Regulation, & Relaxation for Children and their Parents	A series of exercises to support students experiencing trauma that can be performed at home or in programs	http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Exercises-for-Grounding-Emotional-Regulation-Relaxation-Final.pdf
Fingerhold Practice for Managing Emotions & Stress	A variety of different practices to assist youth experiencing overwhelming emotions, sensations, or trauma responses	http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Fingerhold-Practice-for-Managing-Emotions-Stress-Final.pdf
Trauma-Informed Yoga Lesson Plans	Lesson plan designed to help students build self-awareness and self-regulation and empower them with yoga tools	https://yogaed.com/resource/trauma-informed-lesson-plan-triggers/
Trauma-Informed Children's Activities	A series of activities divided by age group to help youth develop skills related to expressing feelings, coping, relaxation, and empowerment	https://www.bemyadvocate.org/filelibrary/Trauma%20Informed%20Children's%20Activities.pdf
Classroom Activities	Resources and activities for discussing trauma with students	http://www.teachtrauma.com/educational-tools/classroom-activities/
Treatment Improvement Protocols (TIPs)	Evidence-based approaches and protocols for programs to implement to prevent substance abuse and mental health disorders	https://store.samhsa.gov/
Trauma-Informed Organizational Toolkit	A roadmap for becoming trauma-informed that offers concrete guidelines to assess if your program is responding appropriately to the needs of families who have experienced traumatic stress	https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Trauma-Informed Organizational Toolkit 0.pdf

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