

## Hidden Slide #1

This Module was designed to be used in the following manner.

- The audience for this Module is division and school teams.
- This Module is meant for whole staff, team, and division presentations.
- Following this training, participants should complete the *Action Plan* document to determine next steps.
- There are eight sections in this module. Teams are not required to complete all components of the Modules. Instead, participants will complete only those Modules that fit the needs of their school.



Module 1 is divided into several sections. Each section can be completed in 30 minutes or less.

## Hidden Slide #2

- In person training
- Presenter notes and information



### **In-person training suggestions**

The Trauma Sensitive Environments Module in-person training should take about 30 - 60 minutes in its entirety.

This presentation provides the basics of trauma and trauma sensitive schools. You may want to add or enhance portions with visuals and examples that will resonate with your audience. As a reminder, always be sure to include appropriate citations when adding resources. Also, you might look to the resources and activities sections for additions that may be helpful.

In summary

- This module outlines the basics of trauma and trauma sensitive schools
- It can be adapted to individual contexts
- The training should last about 30- 60 minutes.

### **Presenter notes information**

Presenter notes are included in the PowerPoint. Background information for the presenter is shown as "**To Know.**" Statements to be shared with participants are shown as "**To Say.**" In some instances, the "**To Know/To Say**" are combined. The presenter notes also include "**To Do**" prompts and cues for "**Handouts**".

Additional activities, examples, videos, etc. are being developed. A presenter may add material from the resources and activities section on the website.

Breaks should be inserted at the discretion of the presenter based on the needs of participants.

## Hidden Slide #3

### Supplies needed

- WIFI access for presenter and participants
- Access to videos (through WIFI if available, but download to flash drive as a back-up)
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Post-it-Notes



### **To Know**

These supplies are needed for the Trauma Professional Learning Modules.



## Hidden Slide #4

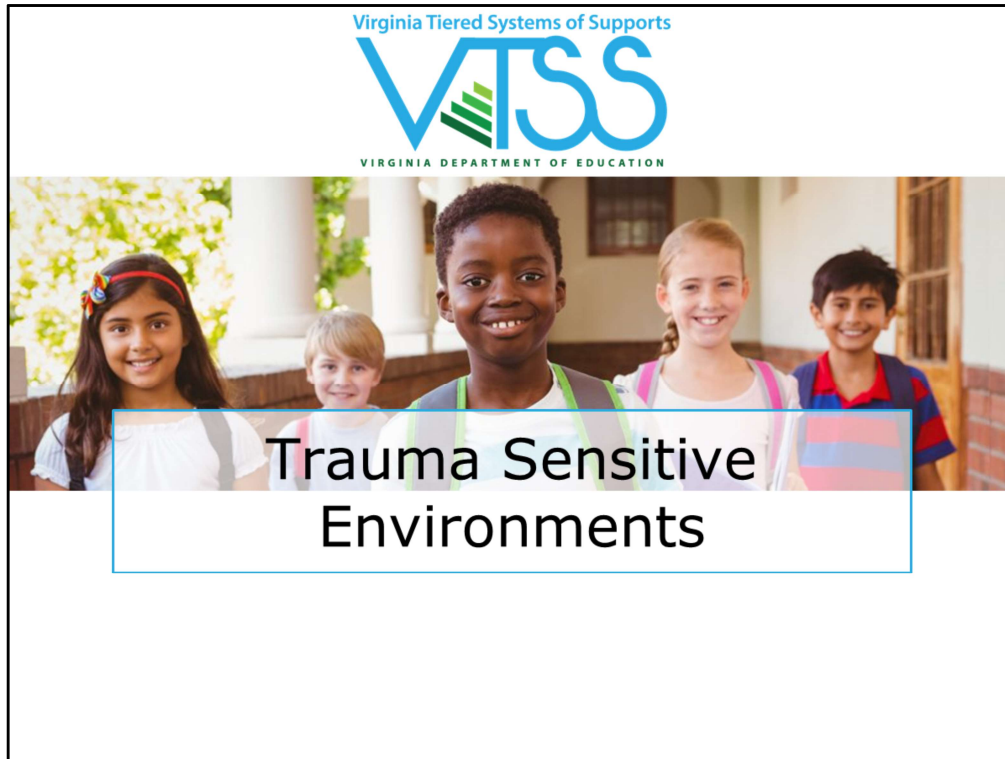
Handouts for this Module  
Action Planner



### **To Know**

The Participant and Presenter Materials are located on the vtss-ric website.

### **References**



**To Know:**

VTSS Professional Learning Modules are organized in the same manner. All schools can begin their journey with Module 1 which introduces the foundational knowledge around trauma and trauma sensitive schools. This powerpoint is part of Module 4 that shares strategies on how we create trauma-sensitive, safe and supportive schools.

**To Say:**

Welcome to the learning module, "Trauma Sensitive Environments". Let's get started!

## What We Will Know and Do

- Understand what a trauma sensitive classroom/school looks like
- Explore some strategies to make your classroom/school trauma sensitive
- Discuss discipline strategies that support students who have been impacted by trauma



### **To Know:**

Go over the learning intentions targeted for this session

### **To Say:**

During this module we hope you will begin to understand what a trauma sensitive classroom or school looks like. We are going to share a few strategies that can be implemented to make your classroom or school trauma-sensitive.

## What this look like

“A **trauma-sensitive school** is a safe and respectful environment that enables students to build caring relationships with adults and peers, self-regulate their emotions and behaviors, and succeed academically, while supporting their physical health and well-being.”

(from the Trauma Sensitive Checklist)

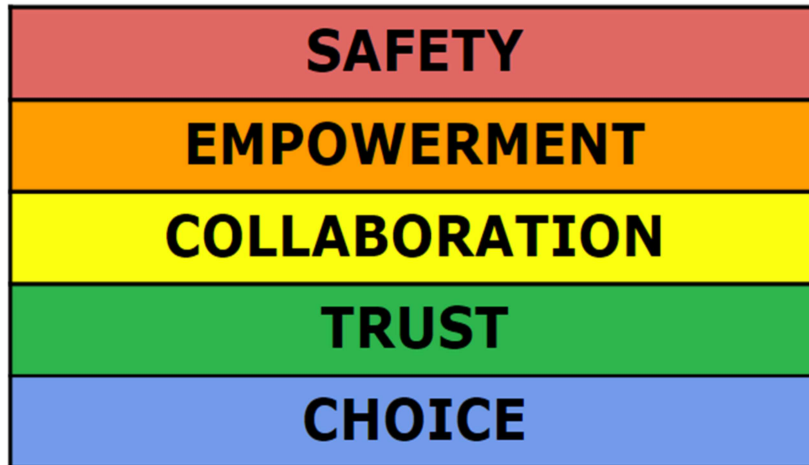


**To Know:** We want all individuals, students, teachers, staff and family members, to feel safe and welcomed, as well as supported in our classrooms/schools.

**To Say:** Trauma sensitive schools help all students to feel safe to learn. The environment is described as welcoming and respectful and provides social-emotional supports so that students can be successful in the classroom setting.



## Trauma Sensitive Care Values



**To Know:** There are five guiding principles associated with trauma-sensitive environments.

**To Say:** These five principles are important to consider when creating a trauma-sensitive environment:

**SAFETY:** *This includes creating spaces where people feel culturally, emotionally, and physically safe as well as an awareness of individual's discomfort or unease.*

- Going back to Maslow's work, we are not going to get anywhere with a child's education when they don't feel safe.
- Despite what we may like to believe, we have to remember that we do not get trust by default, we have to earn it.
- This is especially relevant in education when working with children who have experienced terrible things at the hands of the adults that were supposed to protect them from harm.

**EMPOWERMENT-***This includes the recognition of an individual's strengths. These strengths are built on and validated.*

- To what extent do our activities and setting provide opportunity for skill building and the opportunity to practice those skills?
- How often do we give children and school staff a chance to

practice those things we tell them they should be doing and hopefully have been teaching/coaching them through?

**COLLABORATION: *This includes the recognition that collaboration happens in relationships and partnerships with shared decision-making.***

- We spend way too much time as adults coming to solutions that are ill informed because they do not involve the major players in the approach...the child, the family and the community as a whole in addition to school professionals.
- Use student voice: student led, vocabulary/comprehension/native language
- We should not wait until we see challenging behavior.
  - One, because that isn't proactive, and
  - Two because some of the kids that need our help fall under the radar because they don't display challenging behavior (which we will continue to learn about throughout our modules.

**TRUST-*This includes the recognition of the need for an approach that honors the individual's dignity.***

- Despite what we may like to believe, we have to remember that we do not get trust by default, we have to earn it.
- This is especially relevant in education when working with children who have experienced terrible things at the hands of the adults that were supposed to protect them from harm.
- In order to gain trust, the people and the environment must be predictable.
- As adults, we do as we say we are going to do.
  - If we say we will keep the child (in many cases this is true also of our colleagues working with these students) safe and treat them with dignity and respect, we do that.
  - Our interventions for when things are not going as well have to reflect this as well.
  - This also speaks to the importance of the approach being school wide, not just with certain adults or classrooms.

**CHOICE-**This includes the meaningful sharing of power and decision-making. Transparent operations and decisions maintain trust. Ensure trustworthiness through clarity and consistency in all actions.

- In a trauma sensitive school, we want to embed choice whenever we can.
- Choice and collaboration tie in together as both emphasize the significance of student involvement and voice.
- Often, the more intense and challenging that the behavior gets, the more decisions adults tend to make **for** the child.
  - this tends to intensify the challenging behavior because this is something that has been stripped from the lives of children who have experienced developmental trauma.

**Additional Resources:**

<https://www.acesconnection.com/blog/values-for-a-trauma-informed-care-culture-in-your-classroom-and-school>



## Create safe learning environments

- encourage and value student voice
- make learning fun and rigorous
  - share fun facts and anecdotal info
  - have students create plays, songs/raps, etc. around content
- communicate mistakes are okay; learning through trial and error
- share with students when you make mistakes



**To Know/To Say:** As we move forward, we will begin to explore strategies to make your classroom/school trauma sensitive. Many of these strategies may already be used, but sometimes we might need to be more intentional about the consistency in which they are implemented. We create safe learning environments through student voice and engagement. Also, it is important to be open and honest with students, sharing that adults are human and sometimes struggle and make mistakes too, and that it is okay.

## Develop Relationships

- Share who you are and your goals for working with students
- Get to know student's interests, dreams, and gifts by having 1:1 conferences with students.
  - use bulletin board space to share student's work, dreams or something about them



**To Know:** Building relationships is one of the most important things staff can do to create trauma sensitive environments. There is a module that expands on relationships.

**To Say:** Developing relationships with your students is a great way to build a warm and welcoming classroom environment. When students feel connected it builds safety and trust. There are many ways in which we can build relationships with our students. We can start by sharing information about ourselves! With some students, building relationships will be easy, but with others, you may need to be more intentional. Students who have experienced trauma often do not trust adults, and might push you away. It is important that you continue to try to connect with all students.

## Empower Students

- use language that gives students a sense of accomplishment
- use growth mindset...“not yet”
- have high expectations for all students
- make yourself available to help students reach their goals
- give students responsibilities/“jobs”



**To Know/Say:** We want to have high expectations for all of our students, and approach learning with a growth mindset. Individuals with a **growth mindset** believe they are capable of learning nearly anything if they work hard and accept failures and challenges as opportunities to grow. Encourage students, provide support and praise students for their effort. Be cognizant of the language we are using with our students so that we are acknowledging their progress towards the end goals.

## Use Positive Language

- communicate by telling students what you want them to do
- reframe student's negative language
  - When a student says "I can't", ask "what have you done so far?" or "Let's hear what you are thinking, maybe that is where you are stuck."
- Praise for effort and perseverance



**To Know:** Words are powerful and can have a huge impact on developing relationships and a trusting environment for the students.

**To Say:** How we use language can have a huge impact on others. The use of positive language, telling students what you want them to do, helps them to understand the end goal. Going back to growth mindset, we want to praise for effort and perseverance. It is also important to reframe student's negative comments to a more positive phrase, which communicates a tone of trust and caring.

## Establish Routines and Procedures

- post daily agendas
- teach students procedures around sharpening pencils, collecting homework, transitioning to activities, etc.
- create “call backs” or signals to gain class attention

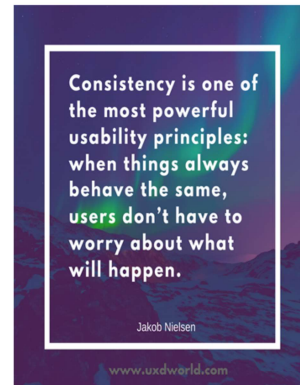


**To Know:** Routines and procedures create predictability and safety for students who have experienced trauma.

**To Say:** Routines and procedures create predictability and safety for students who have experienced trauma. When we provide clearly defined routines and procedures, students know what to expect. Reducing the stress of the unknown helps students to operate in a state of calm. Strategies to support students include posting daily agendas, using visual cues, establishing routines for classroom activities and transitions, and using signals to gain the attention of the class.

## Be Consistent

- consequences for inappropriate behavior are clearly communicated and applied fairly
- students are encouraged to share if they feel they are not treated fairly



**To Know:** Consistency is important in establishing safety and trust with individuals.

**To Say:** When things are consistent, students do not need to worry about what will happen. It is important to have clear consequences for inappropriate behavior which are clearly communicated to the class. Thus, the consequence isn't person, it becomes the standard for the class. It is important to establish open communication with the students so that they are able to speak up if they do not feel that they are treated fairly. Staff should be aware of the perceptions of the students and have conversations with them, to increase the level of trust within the classroom.

## Discussion

Think about what you already do to create trauma sensitive environments.



What you can be more intentional about doing so that all students feel safe and supported?



**To Know:** Teachers are already implementing many strategies which are trauma sensitive. They may want to evaluate their current practices and determine if there are areas for improvement.

**To Say:** Take a few minutes to think about what you are already doing in your classroom or school to create trauma sensitive environments. There are likely many things that you do every day, but are you consistent? Think about what strategies you can be more intentional about implementing to make sure that all students feel safe and supported.

## School-wide Discipline

- School discipline practices are positive, respectful, and restorative
- Retraumatizing practices are avoided (e.g., harsh, punitive approaches, isolation and disconnection from the community)
- Communication procedures include respecting confidentiality, being aware of triggers for students and caregivers, focusing on how issues are addressed



**To Know:** Many students who have experienced trauma display challenging behaviors in the school setting. There are strategies that can help to support students

**To Say:** A safe and supportive school environment, that emphasizes relationships, is the key to addressing behavioral challenges. When schools are trauma sensitive, their discipline practices are positive, respectful and restorative. It is important that we respect the privacy of any information that is shared about a student, and work to avoid triggers. We want to ensure that we do not retraumatize the student by the use of punitive and exclusionary practices.



## Negative Effects of Suspension

***“Frequent out-of-school suspension does not produce better learning environments, deter future misbehavior, or stimulate effective parental involvement.”***

<https://all4ed.org/reports-factsheets/climatechange2/>



**To Know/Say:** Research has shown that out of school suspension is not effective in changing behavior. Instead, suspension and expulsion:

- place students at risk for dropping out;
- are being applied disproportionately to students with disabilities and African American students;
- fail to address the underlying reasons for the behavior;
- do not consider the social-emotional development or environmental influences;
- decrease academic engagement;
- decrease academic achievement; and
- for some, create a pathway to prison rather than to college and a career.

## Policies and Practices that Work for Students

- School-wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (SWPBIS)
- Restorative Justice
- Social-Emotional Learning
- Using Early-Warning Indicator Systems to Identify and Respond to Discipline Issues



<https://all4ed.org/reports-factsheets/climatechange2/>

**To Know/Say:** There are several practices that benefit all students and provide a more equitable and supportive system of school discipline, all while keeping at-risk students engaged and in school. These include Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), Restorative Justice, Social-Emotional Learning and the use of Early Warning Systems. All of these practices can be used within a singular framework to support student.

## Creating a school-wide system

- Proactive with clearly stated expectations
- Expectations are understood by all
- Expectations are taught and retaught
- Acknowledgement for meeting expectations at a 5:1 ratio
- Supports are increased when student doesn't respond
- Data is monitored and decisions are based on data



**To Know/Say:** School discipline policies are trauma-informed when they: Balance accountability with an understanding of traumatic behavior; Teach students the school and classroom rules while reinforcing that school is not a violent place and abusive discipline (which students who have experienced trauma may be accustomed to) is not allowed at school; Minimize disruptions to education with an emphasis on positive behavioral supports and behavioral intervention plans; Create consistent rules and consequences; Model respectful, nonviolent relationships. Communication procedures and protocols are trauma-informed when they: Respect confidentiality; Involve open communication and relationship-building with families; Ensure ongoing monitoring of new policies, practices and training.

## Focus Prevention

- look for patterns of behavior
- identify triggers
- identify early warning signs of escalation
- develop a plan to support the student



**To Know/Say:** We can focus on prevention by using data to determine patterns and identify triggers and early signs of escalation. Be proactive in providing supports for students who may be experiencing problems. Many times changing the environment will have a positive impact on student's behavior. For some students, it may be necessary to develop a formal support plan.

## Change Mindset

- “what happened to you” instead of “what’s wrong with you”
- assume students are doing the best they can
- avoid “criminalizing” children



**To Know/Say:** One of the most important changes that can be made is to switch mindset and instead of asking/thinking “what’s wrong with you”, ask/think “what happened to you?” This thinking sets us up to investigate what is actually going on with the student.

## Avoid Exclusionary Discipline

- Implement restorative practices
- Utilize ISS as an opportunity to work with the student to identify supports and alternative responses/behaviors



<https://www.elc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Trauma-Informed-in-Schools-Classrooms-FINAL-December2014-2.pdf>

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## Link to Mental Health Professionals

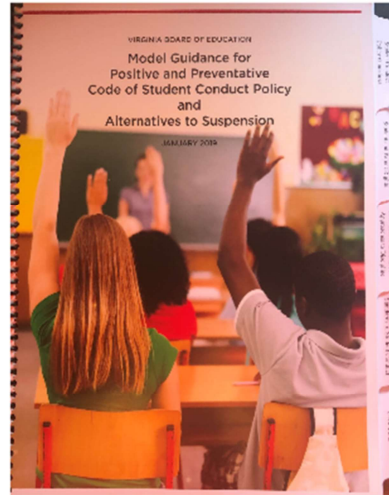
- Refer to School Psychologist, School Counselor or School Social Worker for support
- Refer to community providers to provide therapy and wrap-around services



**To Know/Say:** Some students who have experienced trauma will require additional supports from specialists. Link students to school staff, such as school counselors, school psychologists or school social workers. Many schools also work closely with community agencies who can provide additional support to students.

# Virginia's Model Code of Conduct

- Updated 2019
- Prevention focus
- Tiered systems
- Social-Emotional skills
- Restorative questions
- Leveled responses



**To Know:** The Virginia Department of Education has released a new guidance document around the Code of Conduct (January 2019).

Link to Model Code:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student\\_conduct/code-of-conduct.docx](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_conduct/code-of-conduct.docx)

**To Say:** The VDOE has released Model Guidance on the Code of Conduct. It has been revised to provide guidance for creating safe, supportive, effective learning environments, address data inequities in outcomes for children of color and students with disabilities and reduce exclusionary approaches to discipline

The focus of the model code is on prevention, and it encourages an instructional model to address behavior. It incorporates understanding "what happened" to the student, assessing skill deficits based on CASEL's five competencies, determining academic and behavioral instruction, as well as sanctions, to address behavior, and utilizing restorative practices.



# Action Planning

## Trauma Sensitive Schools Action Plan - Phase 1 Template

Vision is your "why" the work is necessary. Current state of school community environment relates to the current level of understanding of Trauma Sensitive philosophy and practices. The Goal is a broad statement of what your team hopes to accomplish. Objectives explain strategies that are more specific for achieving the goal. Action steps are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, timely (SMART). Action steps have a defined start and end, person (people) responsible, and a way to measure success. Teams should plan regular check-ins throughout the school year to follow up on their action plans. Once tasks have been completed, additional objectives could be added.

Team Vision: \_\_\_\_\_

Current state of school community environment: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal of Phase 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Key Objective	Action Steps	Timeframe	Lead person	Resources Have/Need	Benchmarks of Success

Adapted from Trauma Sensitive School Training Package: Leading Trauma Sensitive Schools Action Guide from the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, retrieved 8/8/2019 [https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/TSS\\_Training\\_Package\\_Action\\_Guide\\_0.pdf](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/TSS_Training_Package_Action_Guide_0.pdf)



**To Know:** Action planning supports engagement in the work and next steps

**To Say:** We’ve now completed the module “” . This your time to pause and reflect on the “how”. Are you ready to engage in the work? How will you begin implementation of the work? Please fill this in on your action plan under objectives and action planning.