# New Orleans Trauma-Informed Schools
# Environmental Scan Checklist

The purpose of this checklist is to identify areas of effectiveness and growth in creating a trauma-informed school environment. The checklist assesses the application of the six key principles of trauma-informed schools: Safety; Trustworthiness and Transparency; Peer Support; Collaboration and Mutuality; Empowerment, Voice and Choice; and Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues (SAMHSA, 2014). The checklist is designed to reflect the degree of application of the six key principles across a range of settings in the school (e.g., classroom, hallways, common outdoor spaces, etc.) and ratings should be completed by the observation team based on observations across settings.

School:_____     Date of Walk-Through:_____

Observer(s):_____

Settings Observed:

_____ Office              _____ Building Interior        _____ Building Exterior        _____ Classroom

_____ Cafeteria          _____ Playground               _____ Gym                      _____ Bus lines

| KEY PRINCIPLES AND INDICATORS | Degree Present | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 Principle is *not at all* in place | 2 Principle is *partially* in place | 3 Principle is *mostly* in place | 4 Principle is *fully* in place | No opportunity to observe |
| SAFETY | | | | | |
| Classrooms are arranged to minimize crowding and distraction. | | | | | |
| Classrooms are actively supervised during instruction. | | | | | |
| Activities are structured in predictable ways (e.g., explicit classroom routines, specific directions, etc.). | | | | | |
| Changes, including new people and activities, are foreshadowed so students can predict what will happen next. | | | | | |
| Positive supports for behavior are employed. | | | | | |
| Positive adult attention is provided. | | | | | |
| Adults refrain from interactions that could be shaming to children (i.e. insisting child do things that unduly stretches child's capability, isolating child, scolding in front of peers). | | | | | |
| Adults refrain from power struggles with children (i.e. verbal sparring, argumentative talk, "he said, she said", proving child wrong, etc.) | | | | | |
| Adults refer to children in descriptive ways and refrain from negative labels such as (i.e. manipulative, borderline, bad, untrustworthy). | | | | | |
| Adults maintain a calm demeanor when interacting with students. | | | | | |
| Adults model emotional control for students. | | | | | |
| Student self-regulation skill building is implemented at a classroom level (e.g., breathing activities, movement, relaxation, calming). | | | | | |

**Notes:**




**Total Safety Score\*:**　　1　　　2　　　3　　　4

\*Based on general observations in this area, not necessarily the sum of the item scores

| KEY PRINCIPLES AND INDICATORS | Degree Present | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1**<br>Principle is *not at all* in place | **2**<br>Principle is *partially* in place | **3**<br>Principle is *mostly* in place | **4**<br>Principle is *fully* in place | No opportunity to observe |
| TRUSTWORTHINESS AND TRANSPARENCY | | | | | |
| Expectations are communicated in clear, concise, and positive ways. | | | | | |
| Display and review schedules consistently. | | | | | |
| Positively stated expectations are posted in the environment. | | | | | |
| There is tangible evidence of warmth, care, and trust. | | | | | |
| Staff display an attitude of the child "doing the best they can" rather than assuming intentionality (i.e. "he is acting this way because he wants to;" "she's not motivated;" "if he can choose to be disruptive, he can choose not to") | | | | | |
| Staff explore the problem (i.e. "what's going on?, what's wrong?") rather than immediately speaking to the child about consequences. | | | | | |
| Staff engage in active listening with children (i.e. listening carefully, restating the problem, empathizing with child's feelings and needs). | | | | | |
| Consequences for failing to meet expectations are delivered consistently and with a calm demeanor. | | | | | |
| Natural consequences that are logically related to the misbehavior are utilized when necessary. | | | | | |
| Restorative conversations or other strategies are utilized following disciplinary action. | | | | | |

**Notes:**




**Total Trustworthiness and Transparency Score*:**     1        2        3        4
*Based on general observations in this area, not necessarily the sum of the item scores

| KEY PRINCIPLES AND INDICATORS | Degree Present | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1**<br>Principle is<br>***not at all*** in<br>place | **2**<br>Principle<br>is ***partially***<br>in place | **3**<br>Principle is<br>***mostly*** in<br>place | **4**<br>Principle is<br>***fully*** in<br>place | No<br>opportunity<br>to observe |
| PEER SUPPORT | | | | | |
| Opportunities exist for learning how to interact effectively with others. | | | | | |
| Opportunities exist to help students understand how their behavior affects others. | | | | | |
| Positive interactions are encouraged. | | | | | |
| Bullying is actively discouraged. | | | | | |
| Adults model respectful relationships with students. | | | | | |

**Notes:**

**Total Peer Support Score\*:    1        2        3        4**
**\* Based on general observations in this area, not necessarily the sum of the item scores**

| KEY PRINCIPLES AND INDICATORS | Degree Present | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1**<br>Principle is ***not at all*** in place | **2**<br>Principle is ***partially*** in place | **3**<br>Principle is ***mostly*** in place | **4**<br>Principle is ***fully*** in place | No opportunity to observe |
| COLLABORATION AND MUTUALITY | | | | | |
| Students' strengths and interests are encouraged and incorporated. | | | | | |
| There is a genuine interest in the activities and personal lives of others. | | | | | |
| There are multiple opportunities to respond and participate during instruction. | | | | | |
| Adults value flexibility in managing behavior rather than strict compliance with rules and treating all children equally. | | | | | |
| Staff are encouraged to participate in self-care activities in their work and personal lives. | | | | | |

**Notes:**

**Total Collaboration and Mutuality Score\*:     1       2       3       4**

\* Based on general observations in this area, not necessarily the sum of the item scores

| KEY PRINCIPLES AND INDICATORS | Degree Present | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1** Principle is *not at all* in place | **2** Principle is *partially* in place | **3** Principle is *mostly* in place | **4** Principle is *fully* in place | No opportunity to observe |
| EMPOWERMENT, VOICE, AND CHOICE | | | | | |
| Opportunities exist for students to learn and practice regulation of emotions and modulation of behaviors. | | | | | |
| Information is presented and learning is assessed using multiple modes. | | | | | |
| Opportunities exist for students to develop skills and build positive self-identity. | | | | | |
| Opportunities exist for students to make choices during the school day. | | | | | |
| The school building is accessible for people with disabilities. | | | | | |
| School staff and information is accessible for peop | | | | | |

**Notes:**

**Total Empowerment, Voice, and Choice Score*:     1        2        3        4**
**\* Based on general observations in this area, not necessarily the sum of the item scores**

| KEY PRINCIPLES AND INDICATORS | Degree Present | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1**<br>Principle is *not at all* in place | **2**<br>Principle is *partially* in place | **3**<br>Principle is *mostly* in place | **4**<br>Principle is *fully* in place | No opportunity to observe |
| CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, AND GENDER ISSUES | | | | | |
| The racial/ethnic make-up of the staff reflects that of the students. | | | | | |
| The environment contains exemplars from the backgrounds of students. | | | | | |
| Instruction contains exemplars from the backgrounds of students. | | | | | |
| Learning activities are reflective of the background of students, families, and the community served by the school. | | | | | |
| Student engagement activities are reflective of the background of students, families, and the community served by the school. | | | | | |
| Classroom management strategies are reflective of the background of students, families, and the community served by the school. | | | | | |

**Notes:**

**Total Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues Score\*:**   1      2      3      4

**\*** Based on general observations in this area, not necessarily the sum of the item scores

References

This measure is a compilation of existing measures, with additions added by the New Orleans Trauma-Informed Schools Learning Collaborative. Measures used in the compilation include:

Trauma-Informed Organizational Self-Assessment developed by the Trauma Informed Care Project, available at: http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org.  The website indicates that the instrument was adapted from the National Center on Family Homelessness Trauma-Informed Organizational Self-Assessment and "Creating Cultures of Trauma- Informed Care: A Self Assessment and Planning Protocol" article by Roger D. Fallot, Ph.D. & Maxine Harris, Ph.D.

Trauma-Sensitive Schools Checklist developed by Lesley University Center for Special Education and the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative of Massachusetts Advocates for Children and the Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School. Retrieved from: http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/trauma%20sensitive%20school%20checklist%20(1).pdf.

Strategies and Resources to Create a Trauma-Sensitive School, developed by the Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health. Retrieved from: http://www.macmh.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Myklebust37.pdf.