

# Schools

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## *Description of Schools*

This document is inclusive of all school settings including Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, public and private schools, and alternative school settings.

## *Screener vs. Assessment*

Some of the key differences between screeners and assessments are listed below. It is important for each provider to decide if they would like to provide a brief screener that determines who will receive a more in-depth assessment, or if they would like to skip the screener and provide the assessment to all clients.

### Screener

- Widely administered
- Brief
- Easy to complete
- Gives yes or no information
- Focused on a specific topic

### Assessment

- Targeted administration
- In-depth
- Requires training to administer
- Gives unique client picture
- Informs treatment
- Completed over 1-3 visits

## *Recommendation*

Targeted or selective trauma screening of students is recommended because traumatic experiences can have a substantial impact on a student's ability to be successful in school. Targeted trauma screening involves screening children based on various factors. A school may decide to screen students exhibiting social emotional difficulties which may look like poor attendance, a high number of discipline referrals, need for school counseling services, or based on lack of academic progress. Integrating trauma screening into various educational and behavioral services (i.e. during the development of Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPS), as part of referral to Response to Intervention (RTI) 504 Plan or an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is another way to provide targeted trauma screenings to specific children in a school.

## *Potential Trauma Screening Tools*

- Communities In Schools of Central Texas Tool – This tool, developed by CIS, is not an exclusive trauma screener. This tool ask questions about the student's current level of emotional functioning, self-concept, feelings of safety, emotional and academic support, and resources in the school and home - without asking for specific historical information about their past life experiences. This tool is meant to open conversations for the student to share current situations as well as past history if they feel comfortable to do so. Please contact [TICC@austinchildguidance.org](mailto:TICC@austinchildguidance.org) for a copy of the tool.

- Mental Health Connection of Tarrant County in collaboration with the Fort Worth Independent School District – This tool includes a set of questions about potentially traumatizing events, as well as a set of questions about the impact of the event on social-emotional wellbeing. . Please contact [TICC@austinchildguidance.org](mailto:TICC@austinchildguidance.org) for a copy of the tool.

### *Resources*

- <http://studentsfirstproject.org/wp-content/uploads/Quick-Fact-Sheet-Trauma-Strategies-for-teachers-2.24.14.pdf>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network Schools Committee. (2010). Engaging Schools: Developing School/Mental Health Partnerships [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved <http://learn.nctsn.org/course/view.php?id=226>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network Schools Committee. (October 2008). Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators. Los Angeles, CA & Durham, NC: National Center for Child Traumatic Stress. [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/Child\\_Trauma\\_Toolkit\\_Final.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/Child_Trauma_Toolkit_Final.pdf)  
<http://ct.counseling.org/2014/06/the-toll-of-childhood-trauma/>
- Trauma-Informed Care Training for Counselors and Therapists [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Training/Trauma Informed Care/begin.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Training/Trauma%20Informed%20Care/begin.asp)

### *Questions to Consider Before Implementation*

- Have district and school personnel participated in training on the impact of trauma on children’s development and behavior? Are district and school personnel aware of potential signs of trauma?
- Are you providing ongoing training and support for teachers on how to support students with trauma histories in the classroom?
- How will you determine which students to recommend for “targeted trauma screening”? Will recommendations for screening be made in the context of student support staffing, RTI and/or IEP meetings? Is there a designated person on campus who can support screening efforts?
- Is the process or tool for trauma screening age- appropriate and culturally sensitive?
- Who is responsible and trained for administering a trauma screening? Will the trauma screening be provided by trained school staff (school counselor, social worker or nurse) or will it be referred to an outside agency (e.g., CIS, SAFE Alliance, ATCIC)?
- Are protocols and training for obtaining parent consent, maintaining confidentiality and mandatory reporting in place?
- What follow-up services or referrals can the school provide? (e.g. Licensed School Social Workers, CIS, ATCIC, Expect Respect, ACGC)
- Will you track number screened vs. the number who screen positive for trauma? How will you use the data collected to guide service delivery?
- Is there an effort to review current disciplinary practices and consider alternative approaches that are trauma sensitive?