

Review Tool for School Policies, Protocols, Procedures & Documents: Examination through a Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) Lens

TIC Value	Desired Responses by Students & Families to the Policy, Protocol, Procedure or Document	Consistency with the Desired Response*					Cite evidence to support rating (see page 3 for examples)
		1 Very Inconsistent	2 Inconsistent	3 Neutral or Not Sure	4 Consistent	5 Very Consistent	
Safety	This policy, protocol, procedure or document ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reinforces you will listen to my history without judging me. • shows you value my emotional and physical safety, even if it means you have to change your usual approach. 						
Trustworthiness	This policy, protocol, procedure or document ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognizes trust is something that is earned over time, so I may not tell you the truth until our relationship is established. • shows you understand I may “test” our relationship, because in the past I have been hurt by people close to me who told me they were doing what is best for me. 						
Collaboration	This policy, protocol, procedure or document ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows you believe relationships matter and you want to know more about me, my history and my current life circumstances, so we can work well together. • shows we will work together to create a plan to help me learn skills, rather than you telling me what the plan is to change my behavior. 						

* For each TIC Value, indicate to what extent you agree or disagree the policy, protocol, procedure or document being reviewed is consistent and aligned with the desired response from students and families. The greater the consistency and alignment, the more trauma-sensitive the policy, protocol, procedure or document is.

Adapted for use by schools from a similar document created by Elizabeth Hudson for the Department of Health Services
 5 TIC Values are from Fallot and Harris, Community Connections, www.ccdc1.org

<p>Choice</p>	<p>This policy, protocol, procedure or document ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognizes a “one-size-fits-all” approach can make me feel discounted. • recognizes I can’t learn to make better choices, unless you give me real choices to make. • shows my choices are important and valued by you. In the past, I’ve been told what I think doesn’t matter and to do things that make me uncomfortable. • helps me to believe I have meaningful choices and the choices I make will be respected by you. 						
<p>Empowerment</p>	<p>This policy, protocol, procedure or document ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • redefines what everyone says are my “problems” as coping strategies. • recognizes my strengths and anticipates I will need to build skills in areas where I struggle. • recognizes I often feel like I can’t be successful and require my strengths to receive more emphasis. • recognizes most of my life I’ve been told what to do and how to do it. As a result, I have to work hard to believe my choices and opinions matter to other people. • helps me to feel more confident and hopeful about my future. 						

Common View vs. Trauma-Informed View

The descriptions below can be used to help determine to what extent a particular school policy, protocol, procedure or document is or is not trauma-informed. The contrasting views are designed to draw attention to language, both verbal and non-verbal, that does not support a trauma-sensitive school environment and may trigger students with trauma histories.

Common View	Trauma-Informed View
Views negative behavior solely as student choice. Utilizes punitive consequences to motivate students (shame, blame, guilt, rejection, isolation or deprivation).	Views students as wanting to do well but possibly 1) lacking the necessary skills to get their needs met or 2) having developed misunderstood patterns of behavior in response to challenges. Considers students may have a negative world view that influences their interactions.
Characterizes student challenges in negative language (acting out, uncontrollable, manipulative, naughty, defiant). Communicates an expectation of failure.	Characterizes student challenges in constructive language (in need of emotional regulation, calming strategies or skills).
Refers to the student with a label (e.g., “Tier 3” or “EBD”).	Eliminates the use of labels and uses richer language to describe the student (e.g., Lance does well with his peers when he receives assistance on the playground).
Utilizes an authoritarian approach.	Uses a collaborative approach.
Punishes or minimizes the importance of the student’s coping strategies.	Recognizes that behavior is communication and searches for the function of the behavior. Strives to support the student meeting the function of the behavior in positive and productive ways.
Does not take the whole student into account (strict focus on academics only, reduced capacity for genuine warmth or concern, prioritizes task completion exclusively).	Recognizes student academics, behavior, social-emotional learning, health, and family and community wellness as connected and works to integrate support from a whole student perspective.
Does not teach expectations to the student and assumes the student should already know.	Teaches and re-teaches expectations in school. Understands that teaching is not simply telling. Differentiates instruction for both academic and behavioral expectations.
Creates systems by which the student must demonstrate he/she is worthy of intervention or must qualify for services (e.g., special education).	Promotes systems that are integrated (not “siloed”) and a culture where all students get what they need to be successful, regardless of whether they qualify for services or not.
Prioritizes the needs of the school or staff over the needs of the student.	Fosters a student-centered environment.
Uses professional “insider” language or jargon.	Uses language that can be understood by students and families considering comprehension level, language skills, and native language.