

# Know the Signs: Student Mental Health & Trauma Informed Education





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**Why this  
training?**




# **1. Prevention & Intervention**

**Prevention and intervention means building a supportive school climate, helping students who are in distress, and taking appropriate action **before** a conflict or problem escalates.**



# COVID-19 and Schools


- Awareness  Proactivity
- Absence compounded issues
  - › loss of safety nets
  - › lack of access to resources
  - › impacted sense of security



What's in  
their invisible  
backpack?

While we may not know all the things our students went through during school closure, we do know how to predict some of the effects!

## Impact of Stress and Trauma

- Academic performance, behavior, relationships, emotions, attention, mental and physical health
- Willful disobedience  'How might this relate to trauma'
  - › All behavior is communication
- Understanding traumatic stress does not *excuse* behavior, but rather *explains* it



# When the tiger is in the room...



Fight: attack the tiger

- \*arguing
- \*destroying property
- \* hitting
- \*yelling

Freeze: hide from the tiger

- \*head down
- \*getting under the desk
- \*“shut down”
- \*can't get words out

Flight: run away from the tiger

- \*eloping from the room
- \*skipping class
- \*avoiding class
- \*chronic absence

Fawn: convince the tiger not to eat you!

- \* compliant/pleaser
- \*seeks reassurance
- \*may be viewed as manipulative

## Seeing behaviors with a “trauma lens”

“Trauma is a body thing”: the body can get stuck in the Four Fs at a biological and unconscious level.



Anger is the tip of the iceberg.

Anger

Shame Shocked **Anxious** Belittled  
Abandoned Guilty Disconnected Manipulated  
Obligated **Defensive** Regret **Frustrated** Betrayed Nervous  
Overwhelmed Inadequate  
Unappreciated Surprised Defeated Foolish Insecure  
Embarrassed Inferior Violated Discouraged Excluded  
Unattractive Powerless Devastated  
Lonely Offended Resentful Vulnerable Worried Confused Rejected  
Sad Controlled Jealous Grief **Disappointed** Discouraged  
Humiliated Trapped Afraid Deceived  
Pressured Disrespected Concerned

There is some sort of emotional pain or discomfort that is not getting dealt with directly and is getting turned into anger.

Ann Silvers, MA

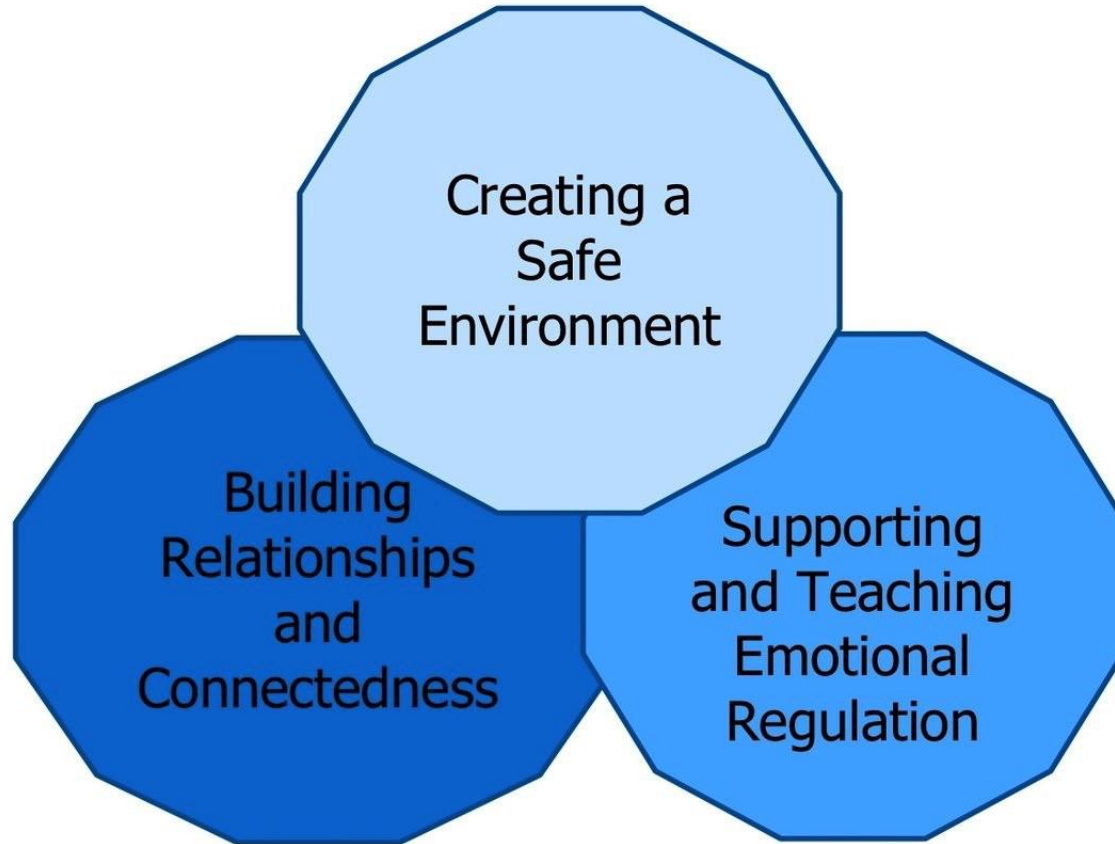
[annsillers.com](http://annsillers.com)

When anger flares...take a deep breath!

He's not giving  
me a hard time.  
He's having  
a hard time.



# Components of Trauma-Informed Care



■ Substance Abuse for Mental Health Services Administration, 2014

The good news...we know what works!!

"There is no more effective neurobiological intervention than a safe relationship."

DR. BRUCE PERRY





# Our capacity to build relationships supports our District Focus on...

- Recovery...of positive emotional states for students
- Discovery...of resilience and growth resulting in emotional stability

No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship  
- James Comer-





**Social and  
emotional  
learning is not  
“another thing  
on the plate”  
it **IS** the plate!**

**~Peter DeWitt**

## **Mitigating Stress in the Classroom**

- Be consistent
- Incorporate movement
- Breaks to process new information
- Assist with prioritization
- Teach stress management and coping skills as **tools**

Texas School Safety Center



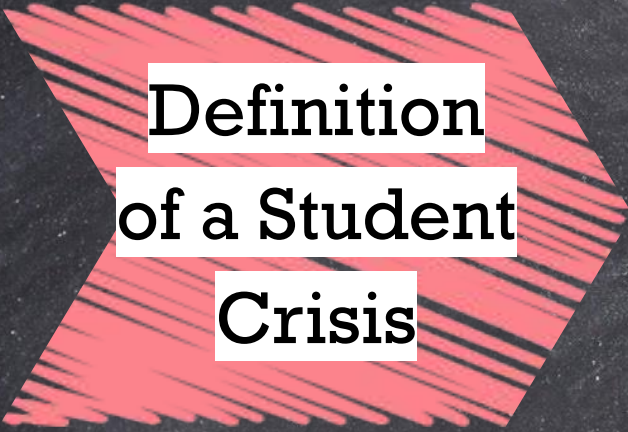


Teachers are often the first to notice the need for intervention . We want you to have an understanding of:

- the warning signs for mental health or behavioral concerns
- whom to turn to if you have questions or concerns about a student's behavior
- the general process used by the campus to respond when needs arise







## Definition of a Student Crisis

A student crisis is defined as any situation involving one of the “**3 Hurts**”: a threat to self, a threat to others, or the presence of abuse, bullying, etc.



## Risk Factors & Warning Signs

1. **RISK FACTORS** are something that has happened to the student
2. **WARNING SIGNS** are how the student responds



Did you know that **1 in 4** students will be affected by at least one of these risk factors?

- Family violence or conflict
- Substance abuse in the home
- Previous suicide attempts
- Sexual abuse
- Teen pregnancy
- History of depression or mental illness
- Family history of mental health concerns
- Isolation/Feeling Alone  
(psychological, environmental and social)

Students bring their experiences with them to school! By learning about these issues, as educators we can better respond to student needs.



# Hurt #

7

## Harm to Self

These may not be the only signs and not all students will display these signs. If you are concerned about a student, it's always better to consult! :

- **Talking about wanting to die**
- **Preoccupation with death through writings & drawings**
- **Talking about feelings of hopelessness**
- **Talking about being a burden to others**
- **Increase use of alcohol or drugs**
- **Reckless behavior**
- **Withdrawing or isolating themselves**
- **Extreme mood swings**
- **Self injury, cutting, burning skin**



# Hurt #

## 2

### Harm to Others

You may notice some overlap with the last set of warning signs. It's also important to know that these are not the only signs and some may not display any of these. Don't hesitate to consult if you are concerned:

- ❖ Social withdrawal
- ❖ Excessive feelings of rejection, isolation and being alone
- ❖ Having been a victim of violence
- ❖ Feelings of being picked on and persecuted
- ❖ Low interest in school and poor academic performance
- ❖ Expressions of violence in writings and drawings
- ❖ Uncontrolled anger
- ❖ Patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating and bullying behaviors
- ❖ History of disciplinary problems
- ❖ Past history of violent and aggressive behavior
- ❖ Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes
- ❖ Serious threats of violence



# Hurt #

## 3

### Someone Is Causing Hurt

Warning signs that a student has been assaulted or abused can easily blend in with the everyday struggles all students can face. If something doesn't seem right, trust your instincts and consult:

- Unusual weight gain or weight loss
- Unhealthy eating patterns, like a loss of appetite or excessive eating
- Signs of physical abuse, such as bruises
- Signs of **depression**, such as persistent sadness, lack of energy, changes in sleep or appetite, withdrawing from normal activities, or feeling “down”
- Anxiety or worry
- Falling grades
- Changes in self-care, such as paying less attention to hygiene, appearance, or fashion than they usually do
- Self-harming behavior
- Expressing thoughts about suicide or suicide behavior
- Drinking or drug use



### 3. Responding to Concerns



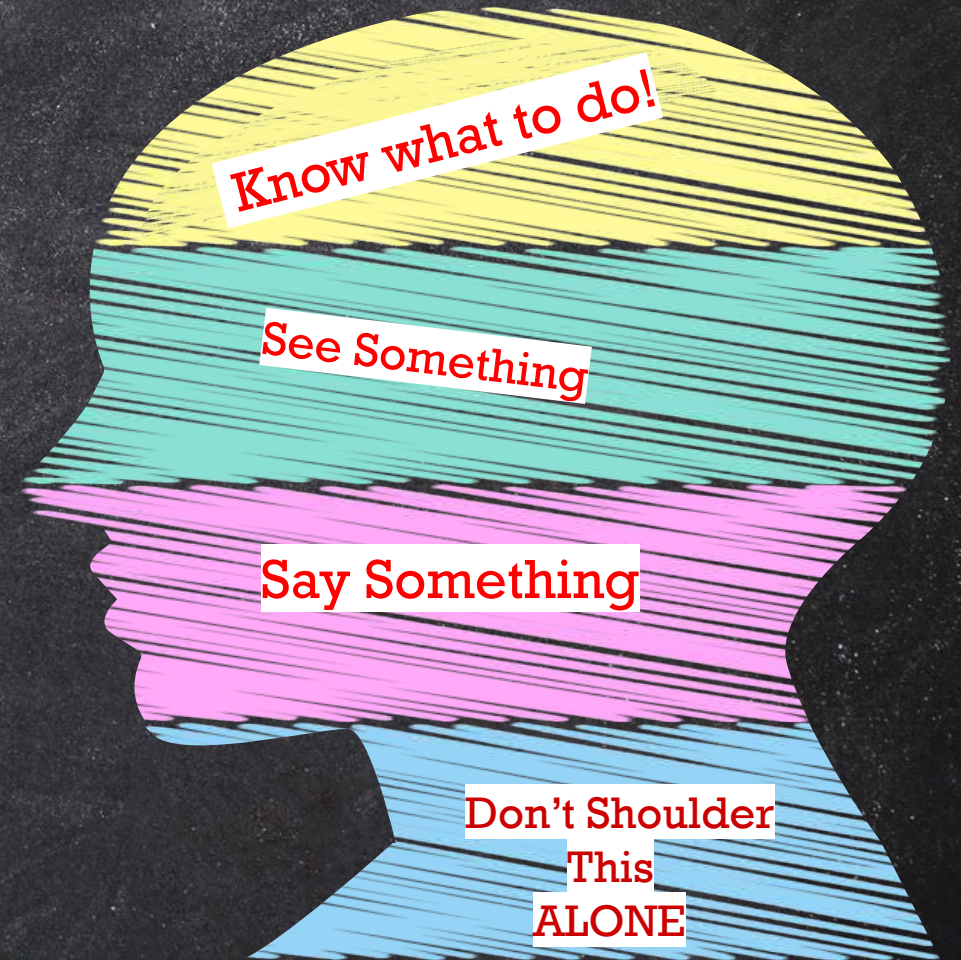


## Take Note & Take Action!

If you are concerned, ask a student if they want to talk. Your care may help the student feel less hopeless. Be prepared to talk to the student privately, calmly, and in a non-judgmental way:

“I’ve noticed that you seem to be going through some rough times recently. You don’t have to face this alone. How can I help? ”

“It seems like (specific behavior) is happening a lot lately. I’d like to connect you with your school counselor so you can have some more support.”







Remember, if you're concerned about a student, trust your instincts and make the report to your school counselor or administrator.

If there has been a threat of harm to self or others, a member of the campus mental health crisis response team (counselor, nurse, AP, SRO) will initiate a threat assessment. If you suspect abuse or neglect, you must report that to CPS, but your counselor or admin can assist you if needed.

In addition, an IMPACT counselor may assist the campus in responding.





# Call the parent!

- Approach the parent with an attitude of curiosity. Don't assume the child is showing the same behavior at school and at home
- Give specific examples (ie. "Billie has not raised her hand once in class since the end of the first quarter. She used to do that all the time.") Limit your examples to 1 or 2 things
- Listen first! Then offer supports (ie. "It sounds like we both have some questions about how Billie is doing. I'd like to connect her to our school counselor so we can better support her at school.")



If the student or parent shares with you about the student's history of...

- mental illness
- hospitalization
- current or past counseling



Consider saying the following, and then follow up with the school counselor or administrator:

*“ I’m really glad you feel comfortable to tell me about your situation. It’s important that we let your child’s support team (counselor, AP, nurse, casemanager, etc.) know! They can offer additional support as well as tools or strategies to help.”*

It may appear you are breaching trust with your student or the parent, but often times there is much more to the student's situation than what has been shared with you. There are many resources that we can connect students to both inside and outside of school! We can also talk with the family about RTI etc.



## 4. Threat Assessment





## Fast Facts about Threat Assessments:

New legislation is now in effect! (SB 11 and HB 18)

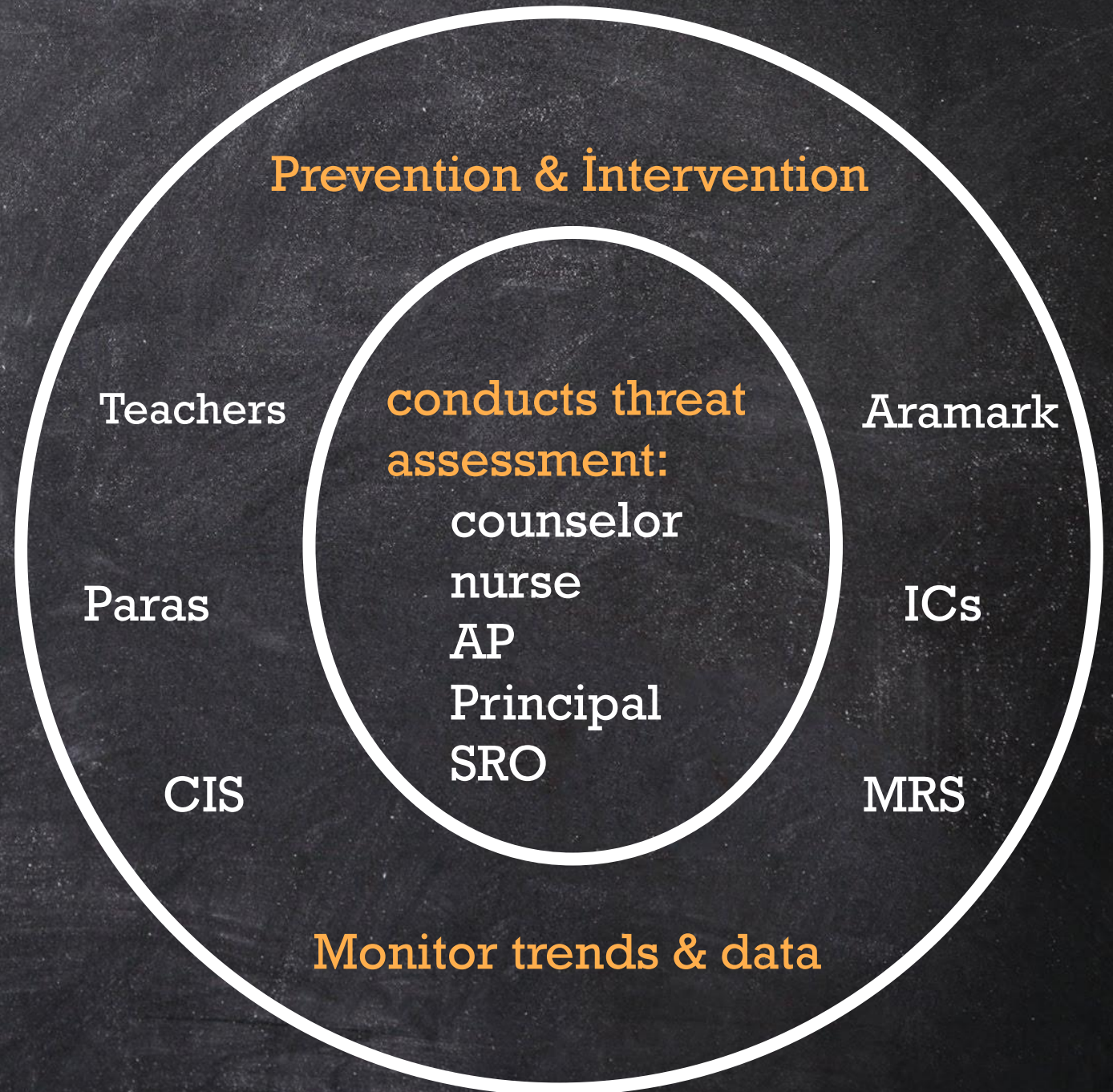
MISD adopted new board policy, revised our procedures, and our Emergency Operations Plan to address recommendations from the Texas School Safety Center

Each campus will now have a Threat Assessment and Safe and Supportive Team (TASST). Depending on campus needs, this may be a standalone group or part of a wider committee such as the leadership team.



# TASST

- identify students that could pose a risk of violence
- act with immediacy to connect students to support
- ensure that our protective systems are operating with fidelity









## MISD's Threat Assessment Response:

“When an MISD staff member receives information regarding a potential mental health crisis or threat involving an MISD student, the school counselor and administrator should be notified immediately. An appropriate team will visit with the student, share the information with the guardian, decide on a plan of action, and follow up with documentation of the team's actions.”



If you feel the  
student is in  
**IMMINENT**  
danger.....

- 
-  Do not leave the student alone
  -  Walk the student to the counselor's or principal's office
  -  We have an open door, walk in policy for emergencies



# Report Threats Immediately!



#1

When a student concern is reported to the school counselor or administrator, there are specific MISD protocols they follow for all forms of student crisis. Time is of the essence!

#2

Make sure to notify by phone or in person so you can be sure the message is received, do NOT just send an email!!

#3

During periods of school closure, if you have an imminent concern, and you do not connect to someone right away, you may have to follow the “after hours” procedures instead.



# After hours...

## Social Media or Weekend Concerns

As an educator you may receive concerning threats or images via social media, especially over the weekend or during non-school hours. If you have ANY feelings or concerns that the student is in danger, threat to self or others, call.....



After you make the call, follow up with your campus administrator. It is your responsibility to know what the campus protocols are for off hour emergencies. If you don't know, ask.



## 5. Resources





[illegible]

## The school counselor can provide:

- ## MISD also has partnerships:

- all MISD students (& staff) can receive 8 free sessions through the HMCC
- Grade 4-12 students may be eligible for telebehavioral health @ Children's Health
- Lifepath systems provides a 24/7 mobile crisis line and the MyStrength app



# SEL & MISD Lives Kind

## Prevention: building relationships

By learning about your students and how each one experiences and talks about their feelings, you can build trust. Your efforts to use strategies to recognize feelings proactively will assist you in responding to student needs throughout the year.



Your counselor and administrators have access to resource pages to assist your campus in building a prevention plan:

- MISD Lives Kind Resource site to incorporate SEL
- Trauma Informed Education site for PD and self-care resources



The IMPACT team has built a canvas course just for you!!

Earn 3 PD Hours! Look for “Mental Health for Educators” in Strive!

Have you ever wondered what makes your students tick? Have you observed that more of our students seem to be struggling with managing stress or handling anxiety? Want to gain insight into the social and emotional needs of your students? You’re invited to take our course “Mental Health for Educators.” This course is self-paced and features a variety of articles, presentations slides, videos, and "webinar style" recordings. Topics in the course include:

- Student wellness & mental health trends
- Ways to teach proactive coping skills
- Ideas for boosting social and emotional literacy for your students
- Creating calm in students and in learning environments
- Trauma informed education strategies
- Warning signs and how to respond to student concerns