



# Trauma Sensitive SCHOOLS

## What is a Trauma Sensitive School?

Trauma Sensitive Schools (TSS) is an innovation in which schools infuse the core values of safety, trust, choice, collaboration and empowerment into their Multi-Level System of Supports practices, assessments and program adjustments.

TSS acknowledges the high prevalence of traumatic exposure for students, the importance of staff well-being and strives to meet the unique needs of all learners.

*Black, P., Cook, E. & Daniel, S. 2017*

## Wisconsin's Trauma Sensitive Schools Initiative

Exposure to traumatic events in childhood is extraordinarily common. Although not all exposure to trauma leads to difficulty in functioning, research tells us that exposure to trauma and toxic stress changes people. Just as a physical assault on the body can cause bodily impairment, psychological trauma can result in a mental injury that impacts such things as a child's ability to regulate emotions, attend to classroom activities, or achieve normal developmental milestones.

Schools can prevent and mitigate the impacts of traumatic exposure on our youth, and become a protective factor for students through intentional development of trauma sensitive practices.

Trauma sensitive schools (TSS) are a process, not a product that have the potential to increase social and emotional skills as well as academic achievement for the entire school body.

Using the principles of implementation science, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) created an Online Professional Development Learning System to support schools as they embark on the transformative process of becoming a TSS.

The TSS Professional Learning System is meant to integrate into your existing Equitable Multi-Level Systems of Supports to promote maximum sustainability and to ensure the implementation is meaningful and manageable.

## TSS Theory of Change





## TSS Online Professional Development Learning System

The Wisconsin TSS Online Professional Development Learning System is a free, online, on-demand system consisting of three primary components:

### 1. LEARNING MODULE

Narrated PowerPoint focused on one aspect of developing a TSS

### 2. SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

Supplemental resources to expand knowledge

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION TOOL

Ready-made tool to use in classrooms

#### Recommended Audience for Learning Modules

Universal learning modules are meant to be viewed by key stakeholders that make up a school leadership team. School leadership then disseminates information to the remainder of the school staff.

Tier II and Tier III modules are meant for schools that have achieved adequate fidelity at the universal level. The target audience is exemplar general education teachers, special education teachers, and pupil services professionals (school psychologists, counselors, social workers, and nurses).

TSS at the universal level is comprised of:

- Safety
- Trustworthiness
- Choice
- Collaboration
- Empowerment
- School Environments
- Emotional and Physical Regulation
- Schoolwide Discipline
- Cognitive Problem-Solving
- Staff Wellness
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Building Relationships
- Academic Supports
- Parent Engagement



[dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health/trauma](https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health/trauma)

September 2018

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, creed, age, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital status or parental status, sexual orientation, or disability.