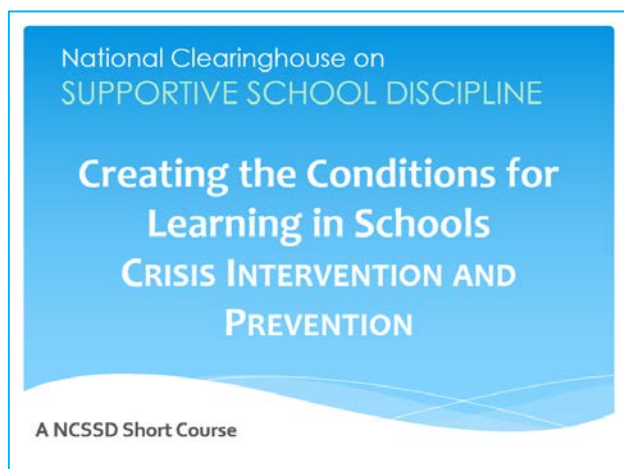


# CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING IN SCHOOLS: CRISIS INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

## A COMPANION GUIDE



CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING IN SCHOOLS TAKES HARD AND SUSTAINED WORK PARTICULARLY IN THE WAKE OF A CRISIS. HOWEVER, IT IS WORK THAT SCHOOLS CAN AND SHOULD NOT HAVE TO DO ON THEIR OWN. The guidance shared in the *Creating the Conditions for Learning in Schools: Crisis Intervention and Prevention* short course is summarized in this companion guide as a collection of action items and checklists. To support your implementation of these action items and checklists, this guide includes the following:

- ▶ Lists of references and resources to support your efforts to prepare your school community for a healthy response to a crisis, as well as to prevent one from occurring;
- ▶ Spotlights on model school systems in which promising crisis intervention and prevention strategies are in place.

This guide is organized by the sections of the course so that you can explore its contents as you step through the module.

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## INTRODUCTION

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### What Is a School Crisis?

This professional development module concerns itself with crises that result from school violence. By school crisis, we refer to a *sudden* and *unexpected* incident, event, or episode of violence that

- ▶ Occurs on school grounds, on the way to or from school, during a school-sponsored event, or on the way to or from a school-sponsored event
- ▶ Results in a highly undesirable, tragic or traumatic outcome such as bodily harm, psychological stress, or death
- ▶ Directly or indirectly affects multiple members of a school community
- ▶ Leads to severe and potentially, prolonged instability and uncertainty
- ▶ Requires school closure or a significant disruption in instructional time

## RESOURCES

### **"Crisis Prevention and Intervention" in Encyclopedia of School Health**

*Kevin Dwyer*

This encyclopedia entry provides a primer on crisis planning, crisis response teams, and the role of school climate.

### **Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities**

*Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools*

*U.S. Department of Education*

This guide is intended to give schools, districts, and communities the critical concepts and components of good crisis planning, stimulate thinking about the crisis preparedness process, and provide examples of promising practices.

### **School Crisis Management: A Hands-On Guide to Training Crisis Response Teams**

*Kendall Johnson and Ronald D. Stephens*

This guide aims to help schools develop contingency plans and train on-site response teams in crisis management. Updated with new information on the impact of crisis on children, detailed strategies and procedures teach how to manage any emergency that may hit a school. One hundred charts can be reproduced as overheads or copied for training sessions.

### **Understanding School Violence**

*Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*

This fact sheet defines and discusses the prevalence of school violence as a public health problem as well as CDC efforts to prevent school violence.

## Five Crisis Management Areas

1. Prevention
2. Protection
3. Mitigation
4. Response
5. Recovery

## RESOURCES

### Presidential Policy Directive / PPD-8: National Preparedness *Department of Homeland Security*

Since 2011, national emergency preparedness efforts have been informed by Presidential Policy Directive 8. This directive defines preparedness around five mission areas.

## Learning Objectives

1. Recount and distinguish the essential **intervention strategies** to be executed after a crisis in the short term and the long term.
2. Self-assess your school community's **preparedness for a school crisis**.
3. Outline key questions a school community should consider when **assessing its risk for school crisis**.
4. Recognize the student, family, school, and community **risk factors** that can forewarn students and schools in need of targeted intervention.
5. Specify the **protective factors and conditions for learning** that can prevent a crisis.
6. Articulate **six action items** schools and school systems can execute to prevent a school crisis.
7. Detail the **10 steps** schools and school systems should take to implement a tiered approach to crisis prevention.
8. Suggest **selection criteria** schools and school systems might consider when exploring potential programs and interventions.
9. Identify **model school systems** in which crisis intervention and prevention strategies are in place.

## RESPONDING TO A CRISIS

### Learning Objectives:

1. Recount and distinguish the essential intervention strategies to be executed after a crisis in the short-term and the long-term
2. Self-assess your school community's preparedness for a school crisis
3. Outline key questions a school community should consider when assessing its risk for school crisis
4. Recognize the student, family, school and community risk factors that can forewarn students and/or schools in need of targeted intervention
5. Specify the protective factors and conditions for learning that can prevent a crisis

### Intervening During a Crisis

#### CHECKLIST: SAMPLE CRISIS PLAN COMPONENTS

- Call first responders (e.g., law enforcement, fire department).
- Convene the crisis team to assess the situation and initiate crisis response procedures.
- Assess life and safety issues immediately.
- Secure all areas.
- Notify the superintendent.
- Alert school staff to the situation.
- Provide immediate emergency medical care.
- Evaluate available and needed resources.
- Activate the crisis communication procedure and system of verification.
- Implement evacuation and other procedures to protect students and staff from harm; avoid dismissing students to unknown care.
- Adjust the bell schedule to ensure safety during the crisis.
- Alert persons in charge of various information systems to prevent confusion and misinformation.
- Notify parents.
- Contact appropriate community agencies and the school district's public information office, if appropriate.
- Initiate postcrisis procedures.

## RESOURCES

### Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools

*K. Dwyer, D. Osher, and C. Warger*

This federally funded guide offers research-based practices designed to assist school communities in identifying these warning signs early and to develop prevention, intervention, and crisis response plans. The guide includes the following sections:

- Characteristics of a School That Is Safe and Responsive to All Children
- Early Warning Signs
- Getting Help for Troubled Children
- Developing a Prevention and Response Plan
- Responding to Crisis
- Resources
- Methodology, Contributors, and Research Support

## Intervening in the Aftermath of a Crisis

### CHECKLIST: INTERVENING IMMEDIATELY AFTER A CRISIS

- Initiate a coordinated community response.
- Help parents understand children's reactions to violence.
- Help teachers and other staff deal with their reactions to the crisis.
- Help students and faculty adjust after the crisis.
- Help victims and family members of victims reenter the school environment.
- Help students and teachers address the return of a previously removed student to the school community

### CHECKLIST: WERE WE PREPARED FOR THIS CRISIS?

- Did we have a core *crisis response team* in place?
- Did we establish *crisis intervention procedures*?
- Did we provide *in-service training* to all staff?
- Did we *involve community groups and local agencies* in crisis intervention planning?
- Did we conduct *routine drills*?
- Did we conduct a *risk assessment*?

## RESOURCES

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### **Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plan**

*U.S. Department of Education*

*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

*U.S. Department of Homeland Security*

*U.S. Department of Justice*

*Federal Bureau of Investigation*

*Federal Emergency Management Agency*

This guide provides recommendations in the development of plans not only to respond to an emergency, but also outlines how schools at all grade levels can plan for preventing, protecting against, mitigating the impact of, and recovering from these emergencies. The guide translates lessons learned from the administration's work on national preparedness to benefit from recent advancements in the emergency planning field. The guide introduces new approaches to planning and includes walking through different emergency scenarios to create a course of action for each objective the team is trying to accomplish.

### **Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities**

*Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools*

*U.S. Department of Education*

This guide is intended to give schools, districts, and communities the critical concepts and components of good crisis planning, stimulate thinking about the crisis preparedness process, and provide examples of promising practices.

### **School Crisis Management: A Hands-On Guide to Training Crisis Response Teams**

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This guide aims to help schools develop contingency plans and train on-site response teams in crisis management. Updated with new information on the impact of crisis on children, detailed strategies and procedures teach how to manage any emergency that may hit a school. One hundred charts can be reproduced as overheads or copied for training sessions.

## CHECKLIST: RISK ASSESSMENT

- Do all school staff (e.g., teachers, teacher aids, substitute teachers, counselors, librarians, specialists, cafeteria workers) have sufficient training to *identify signs* of depression, suicide ideation, abuse, bullying, neglect, and gang affiliation?
- Do all staff participate in annual and/or ongoing training on *positive approaches to school discipline* that prioritize discerning and addressing the individual factors that contribute to a student's misbehavior?
- Do all staff have access to manuals (e.g., restorative circle implementation guide), protocols (e.g., list of procedures to follow when facilitating peer mediation) and onsite support (e.g., trainer, coach, specialist, school administrator) to ensure that positive approaches are implemented *consistently* and with *fidelity*?
- Did we have systems in place to *identify students in the greatest need*?
- Did we have the appropriate programs and procedures in place to *support students positively*?
- Do all members of the school community have *easy access to medical, mental health, and social services*?

## RESOURCES

### [Risk and Protective Factors Associated With Gang Affiliation Among High-Risk Youth: A Public Health Approach](#)

[Dawn Delfin McDaniel](#)

This report discusses risk and protective factors associated with gang affiliation among a high-risk youth population to better inform primary prevention strategies.

### [Risk and Protective Factors: What Schools Can Do to Build Protective Factors](#)

[Children's Bureau](#)

[U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)

This resource lists a number of risk and protective factors that have been identified in relation to child abuse and neglect. It suggests specific actions that school personnel can take to promote protective factors and build resilience in children and families.

### [Suicide Assessment Five-Step Evaluation and Triage \(SAFE-T\): Pocket Card for Clinicians](#)

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)

This tool assists clinicians in conducting suicide assessment using a five-step evaluation and triage plan to identify risk factors and protective factors, conduct a suicide inquiry, determine risk level and potential interventions, and document a treatment plan.

### [Teen Dating Violence: How Peers Can Affect Risk and Protective Factors](#)

[National Institute of Justice](#)

[U.S. Department of Justice](#)

This resource reviews a multisystematic framework that explains the influence of peer relationships on risk. This report examines research that answer three key questions: (1) Do risky peer contexts increase the likelihood that teens will experience dating violence? (2) What roles do peers play in seeking help after teens experience violence? (3) Can group interventions or those focused on social contexts reduce the risk for teen dating violence? Findings support the conclusion that programs and policies aimed at preventing teen dating



violence or promoting healthy teen relationships may be more effective if they take into consideration the potential ways that peers and peer contexts shape teens' experiences within close relationships.

### **Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates**

*U.S. Secret Service*

*U.S. Department of Education*

This resource reflects on information about prior school attacks to offer a process for identifying, assessing, and managing students who may pose a threat of targeted violence in schools. This guide represents a modification of the Secret Service threat assessment process, based upon findings from the Safe School Initiative. It is intended for use by school personnel, law enforcement officials, and others with protective responsibilities in our nation's schools. This guide includes suggestions for developing a threat assessment team within a school or school district, steps to take when a threat or other information of concern comes to light, consideration about when to involve law enforcement personnel, issues of information sharing, and ideas for creating safe school climates.

### **Youth Violence: Risk and Protective Factors**

*CDC*

This resource shares research on the risk factors that can contribute to youth violence as well as the protective factors that can prevent it.

## The Conditions for Learning

1. **Safety.** Learners must be, and feel, safe. Safety involves emotional as well as physical safety, such as being safe from sarcasm and ridicule.
2. **Support.** Learners must feel connected to teachers and the learning setting, must have access to appropriate support, and must be aware of and know how to access the support.
3. **Social and Emotional Learning.** Learners need to learn to manage their emotions and relationships positively and be surrounded by peers who also have socially responsible behavior.
4. **Engagement and Challenge.** Learners need to be actively engaged in learning endeavors that are relevant to them and that enable them to develop the skills and capacities to reach positive life goals.

### RESOURCES

[NCSSD Reference Guides: Conditions for Learning](#)  
*National Clearinghouse on Supportive School Discipline*

This interactive reference guide includes general information and research, strategies and practices, tools, and websites on conditions for learning.

## National Child Traumatic Stress Network's Seven Elements of Trauma-Informed Systems

1. Screen routinely for trauma exposure and symptoms.
2. Implement culturally appropriate, evidence-based assessments and treatments for traumatic stress and symptoms.
3. Provide resources to children, families, and providers on trauma, its impact, and treatment options.
4. Build on the strengths of children and families impacted by trauma.
5. Address parent and caregiver trauma.
6. Collaborate across child-serving systems to coordinate care.
7. Support staff by minimizing and treating secondary traumatic stress, which can lead to burnout.

### RESOURCES

[Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit](#)  
*National Child Traumatic Stress Network*

Research suggests that approximately 25 percent of American children will experience at least one traumatic event by the age of 16. A child's reactions to trauma can interfere considerably with learning and behavior at school. However, schools also serve as a critical system of support for children who have experienced trauma. This resource provides administrators, teachers, and staff with tools and materials they can use to help reduce the impact of trauma on children by recognizing trauma responses, accommodating and responding to traumatized students within the classroom setting, and referring children to outside professionals when necessary.

### **Helping Traumatized Children Learn: A Report and Policy Agenda**

*Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative*

This report summarizes the research from psychology and neurobiology that documents the impact trauma from exposure to violence can have on children’s learning, behavior, and relationships in school. The report also introduces the Flexible Framework, a tool organized according to six core operational functions of schools that can help any school create a trauma-sensitive learning environment for all children.

### **Helping Traumatized Children Learn: Creating and Advocating for Trauma-Sensitive Schools**

*Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative*

This resource offers a guide to a process for creating trauma-sensitive schools and a policy agenda to provide the support schools need to achieve this goal. Grounded in theory and practice in schools and with families, the guide is intended to be a living document that will grow and change as more schools become trauma sensitive and add their ideas. The policy agenda calls for changes in laws, policies, and funding streams to support schools in this work. Together, the online learning community and the book are designed to complement each other, helping to build a growing and increasingly visible trauma-sensitive learning community.

### **School Violence: Resources for School Personnel**

*National Child Traumatic Stress Network*

This online resource provides guidance on responding to a school crisis, such as psychological first aid and information on early, intermediate, and long-term recovery interventions.

### **Unlocking the Door to Learning: Trauma-Informed Classrooms and Transformational Schools**

*Maura McInerney and Amy McKlindon*

*Education Law Center*

This resource defines childhood trauma and discusses trauma-informed approaches schools can implement to improve conditions for learning.

## **Administration on Children, Youth and Families’ 10 Protective Factors**

1. Self-regulation
2. Relational skills
3. Problem-solving skills
4. Involvement in positive activities
5. Parenting competencies
6. Caring adults
7. Positive peers
8. Positive community
9. Positive school environments
10. Economic opportunities

## RESOURCES

### **2015 Prevention Resource Guide: Making Meaningful Connections**

*Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

This resource offers support to service providers as they work with parents, caregivers, and their children to prevent child maltreatment and promote social and emotional well-being. The resource guide focuses on protective factors that build family strengths and promote optimal child and youth development. Information about protective factors is augmented with tools and strategies that help providers integrate the factors into community programs and systems. Agencies, policymakers, advocates, service providers, and parents alike will find resources in this book to help them promote these important elements within their communities and families.

### **Prevention Resource Guide**

*Health and Human Service's Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect  
Child Welfare Information Gateway  
FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention  
Center for the Study of Social Policy— Strengthening Families*

This guide was created primarily to support community-based child abuse prevention professionals who work to prevent child maltreatment and promote well-being. Find information on protective factors approaches to promoting well-being, working with families using protective factors, engaging communities, and protecting children. The guide also includes tip sheets for parents and caregivers and activity calendars—in both Spanish and English.

### **Promoting Protective Factors Factsheets**

*Development Services Group, Inc.  
Child Welfare Information Gateway*

This series of factsheets for practitioners explores the importance of protective factors in working with the following in-risk populations served by the Administration on Children, Youth and Families:

- ▶ [Promoting Protective Factors for Children Exposed to Domestic Violence](#)
- ▶ [Promoting Protective Factors for Children and Youth in Foster Care](#)
- ▶ [Promoting Protective Factors for In-Risk Families and Youth](#)
- ▶ [Promoting Protective Factors for Pregnant and Parenting Teens](#)
- ▶ [Promoting Protective Factors for Victims of Child Abuse and Neglect](#)

### **Protective Factors for Populations Served by the Administration on Children, Youth and Families: A Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

*Development Services Group, Inc.*

This resource examines the research and develop a literature review on protective factors relevant to the Administration on Children, Youth and Families' target populations. Information and resources gleaned from this examination helped inform this factsheet and aid the development of graphic models and a brief for researchers.

### **Protective Factors Approaches in Child Welfare Issue Brief**

*Development Services Group, Inc.  
Child Welfare Information Gateway*

This issue brief provides an overview of protective factors approaches to the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. It is designed to help policymakers, administrators, child welfare and related professionals, service providers, advocates, and other interested individuals understand the concepts of risk and protective factors in families and communities and learn ways in which building protective factors can help to lessen risks for child abuse and neglect.

### **Protective Factors Survey**

*National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention*

This tool is a valid and reliable tool for measuring change in protective factors. It is a self-administered survey that measures protective factors in five areas: family functioning/resiliency, social support, concrete support, nurturing and attachment, and knowledge of parenting/child development. The survey comes with a downloadable instruction guide and database. The S-PFS, a valid and reliable Spanish adaptation of the Protective Factors Survey, is also available.

## PREVENTING A CRISIS

### Learning Objectives:

6. Articulate six action items schools and school systems can execute to prevent a school crisis
7. Detail the ten steps schools and schools systems should take to implement a tiered approach to crisis prevention
8. Suggest selection criteria schools and school systems might consider when exploring potential programs and interventions
9. Identify model school systems in which crisis intervention and prevention strategies are in place

### Action Items: Preventing a School Crisis

- Recommendation 1:** Assess Factors Contributing to Disparities in School Safety and Discipline
- Recommendation 2:** Expand Collection and Use of Data on Nonacademic Conditions in Schools
- Recommendation 3:** Apply Tiered Approaches to Prevention and Addressing Mental Health Challenges
- Recommendation 4:** Implement Evidence-Based Social and Emotional Learning
- Recommendation 5:** Broaden Investment in the Professionals Who Provide Student Support Services
- Recommendation 6:** Support Development of Individual and Organizational Capacities to Reduce Disparities

## RESOURCES

### [Avoid Simple Solutions and Quick Fixes: Improving Conditions for Learning](#)

*David M. Osher (AIR), Jeffrey M. Poirier (AIR), G. Roger Jarjoura (AIR), Kimberly Kendziora (AIR), and Russell Brown (Cleveland Metropolitan School District)*

Between 2008 and 2012, AIR conducted technical assistance work in Cleveland. The project concluded with a set of [six recommendations](#) (summarized above under “Action Items: Preventing a School Crisis”) to implement student centered policies such as transforming punitive in-school suspension to planning centers to which students can self-refer and learn self-discipline. Cleveland realized remarkable improvements districtwide. This report shares lessons learned from this comprehensive districtwide approach to improving conditions for learning.

### [Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline](#)

*U.S. Department of Education*

This guide draws on emerging research and best practices to describe three key principles and associated action steps that can help guide state and local efforts to improve school climate and school discipline.

### [NCSSD Guiding Principles Tip Sheet](#)

*National Clearinghouse on Supportive School Discipline*

This tip sheet lists national, state, and local resources and reference guides to support the adoption of the federal guiding principles for improving school climate and discipline. The resources are organized by the three guiding principles:

1. Climate and Prevention
2. Clear, Appropriate, and Consistent Expectations and Consequences
3. Equity and Continuous Improvement

### Action Items: Selecting Tiered Interventions

- Step 1:** Choose *problems*.
- Step 2:** Identify *goals*, target population, and outcomes.
- Step 3:** Find *promising practices*.
- Step 4:** Assess *fit* with local context.
- Step 5:** Assess implementation *capacity*.
- Step 6:** *Plan* for implementation.
- Step 7:** *Implement* the plan.
- Step 8:** *Evaluate* implementation.
- Step 9:** Engage in *continuous quality improvement*.
- Step 10:** Plan for *sustainability*.

### RESOURCES

#### Getting To Outcomes® (GTO®): A Pathway to Results and Accountability

Shelley H. Wiseman, Matthew Chinman, Patricia A. Ebener, Sarah B. Hunter, Pamela Imm, and Abraham Wandersman

The GTO tool offers a 10-step approach to strategically planning, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining interventions.

### Checklist: Criteria for Selecting Interventions

- Is the program based on a *research-based theory of change* that promotes positive approaches to behavioral, emotional, and academic problems?
- Does the program have *documented* effectiveness? Does the program have documented effectiveness for specific student groups, particular your target student population(s)?
- Can the program be *easily integrated* with existing school practices?
- Does the program developer provide *sufficient documentation, training, and technical assistance* to support effective implementation?
- Does the program have *demonstrated effectiveness in comparable schools or school systems* to which you can turn to as an implementation model?

## RESOURCES

### Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Evidence-Based Interventions

*National Clearinghouse on Supportive School Discipline*

This online guide includes tools, resources, and issue briefs that can help school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders be more strategic in their decision-making about planning, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based interventions to improve the conditions for learning and facilitate positive student outcomes.

### School System Spotlight

▶ **Humanware Initiative: Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD)**

In addition to the hardware it employs to ensure safe schools (e.g., surveillance cameras, metal detectors, x-ray machines, wands), CMSD is committed to addressing the humanware—the social and emotional aspects of school safety to head off critical incidents before they occur. The Humanware Initiative provides opportunities for all students to acquire social and emotional competencies through evidence-based programs that teach students to recognize strengths and emotions; manage emotions and behaviors to achieve goals; show understanding and empathy toward others; form positive relationships; work on teams; deal effectively with conflict; and make ethical and constructive choices about personal and social issues. Additionally, the Humanware initiative advocates for best practices that ensure that all human resources in a child's school, family, and community function together so that students are learning in safe, supportive, and successful schools.

▶ **Code of Conduct Advisory Council: Boston Public Schools**

The mission of the Code of Conduct Advisory Council (COCAC) is to provide an opportunity for parents, students, administrators, teachers, advocates, community partners, and other stakeholders to work collaboratively with the Boston Public Schools (BPS) to improve disciplinary policies and promote positive school climate. In 2014, with support from the COCAC, BPS revised its [code of conduct](#) to reflect a commitment to the following:

- Creating safe, welcoming school environments that prioritize student learning
- Strengthening its tiered system of progressive discipline and student supports
- Giving students the opportunity to make academic progress during suspensions and expulsions
- Providing due process for students facing potential suspension or expulsion

▶ **Restorative Justice: Oakland Unified School District**

Restorative Justice (RJ) is a set of principles and practices employed in the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) to build community and respond to student misconduct, with the goals of repairing harm and restoring relationships between those impacted. The RJ program in OUSD pilots a three-tiered model of prevention, intervention, and supported reentry in response to conflict or harm. The RJ program works to lower the school district's rate of suspension and expulsion and to foster positive



school climates with the goal of eliminating racially disproportionate discipline practices and the resulting push-out of students into the prison pipeline.

▶ **Trauma-Informed Schools: UCSF HEARTS Program: San Francisco Unified School District**

The UCSF Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools (HEARTS) project is a comprehensive, multilevel school-based prevention and intervention program for children who have experienced trauma. The goal of UCSF HEARTS is to create school environments that are more trauma-sensitive and supportive of the needs of traumatized children. A main objective of this project is to work collaboratively with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) to promote school success by decreasing trauma-related difficulties and increasing healthy functioning in students within SFUSD who have experienced complex trauma. Trauma-sensitive school environments will likely benefit not only traumatized children, but also those who are affected by these children, including child peers and school personnel.

**Suggested Citation:**

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