



LOS ANGELES  
**EDUCATION**  
PARTNERSHIP

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## **Professional Development Offering:**

### **Creating Trauma Sensitive Schools**

#### **Why Trauma Sensitive Schools**

When a child experiences strong, frequent or chronic adversity, the stress response becomes toxic and can disrupt healthy development. Chronic exposure to toxic stress can damage children's developing brains. These changes in the brain's structure and function can have detrimental effects on a child's intellectual, social, and emotional functioning. Currently, **one in four** public school students have experienced at least one traumatic event that can affect learning or behavior, with the number increasing within underserved communities.

**Protective factors that foster resiliency can be cultivated at the school level.** They include positive relationships with peers and responsive adults, healthy emotional classroom and school climates, participation in extra-curricular activities, academic engagement, emotional regulation, social competence, and problem-solving skills. Schools that have implemented trauma-informed practices have had significant declines in student illness, absenteeism, and suspension rates.

#### **Creating a 'Trauma Sensitive' Classroom and School Site**

Grounded in research from the fields of education psychology, psychiatry, and neurobiology, the LAEP **Creating Trauma Sensitive Schools workshop** will offer a framework for educators, principals, health care staff, and school counselors whose work serves large populations of students who have been exposed to varying levels of childhood trauma. This workshop will unpack the concept of 'trauma-sensitive' schools and trauma-informed practices at school sites and provide school based strategies that can mitigate their short- and long-term effects of chronic exposure to toxic stress. It will address the diverse roles of school stakeholders and identify tangible methods one can apply to school sites. Participants will have the opportunity to collaborate and create an action plan for their school sites/work.

Participants will learn about the biological effects of various types of childhood trauma and will acquire a deep understanding of their implications at the classroom and whole school levels. In developing this knowledge base, participants will be able to identify risk factors that can ultimately lead to severe consequences for young people if left unchecked.

Participants will also be provided with poignant, peer-reviewed data that underscore the urgency of initiating school-wide efforts to implement a trauma-sensitive care theory of action. They will learn how to initiate these school-level approaches, which: a) must be personalized to meet the needs of individual school and student populations and b) should ultimately promote whole-child growth and well-being.

Paramount to our organization's professional development approach is the concept of building the individual and collective capacities of teachers, students, and families. Consequently, with each of our training and workshop modules, we incorporate a multiple-track agenda that prioritizes active listening, dynamic learning activities, and embedded strategies that participants can employ with other student or adult group learning contexts.

**LAEP's professional development will train teachers and administrators in:**

- 1) Seminal and current research associated with adverse childhood experiences
- 2) The potential effects of toxic stress on developing children's brains
- 3) The signs, care, and coping strategies for compassion fatigue in teachers
- 4) School-wide and classroom strategies that can be used to implement trauma-informed practices.

**For more information on how to bring these services to your school please contact:**

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