



TRAUMA-INFORMED JUVENILE COURT SELF-ASSESSMENT

OVERVIEW

In 2016, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) released a document entitled “[Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice System](#).” That document outlined eight elements that represent aspirational standards characterizing daily operations of a juvenile justice system aiming to be trauma-informed. The elements are logically organized around typical case processing (e.g., screening and assessment, intervention planning and service delivery) but also address critical staff topics (e.g., prevention and management of secondary traumatic stress), broader systems issues (e.g., trauma-informed cross system collaboration, partnering with youth and families), and the need for policies and procedures to be developed that are consistent with these elements.

A key challenge for juvenile justice systems is how to ensure that the aspirational goals contained in each essential element are adopted, infused, and sustained into the day-to-day operations of a juvenile justice system. For some systems, this may involve reviewing current practices and ensuring that trauma-specific initiatives are operationalized via policies to ensure continuity and sustainability of the practice. For other systems, the essential elements may reflect a system’s desire to become trauma-informed but with no clear guidance on how to begin achieving this type of system change.

The Essential Elements include eight aspirational standards of a trauma-informed juvenile justice system.

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Therefore, to assist juvenile justice systems in meeting this challenge, the NCTSN has developed the Trauma-Informed Juvenile Court Self-Assessment (TI-JCSA). The TI-JCSA parallels the essential elements. It provides a juvenile justice system with a framework to examine, review, and rate day-to-day operations with a set of benchmarks to evaluate to what extent court operations reflect the content, process, and systems-level procedures reflected in each essential element.

The title of the document “Trauma-Informed Juvenile Court Self-Assessment” may be somewhat misleading. The TI-JCSA incorporates policies and practices that extend beyond the day-to-day operations of a juvenile courtroom. We recognize that the organizational structure of juvenile justice systems varies from state to state (e.g., diversion or probation services operating independently of the juvenile court or these same services being directly administered by juvenile court staff). We also recognize that many activities referenced in the Essential Elements do not happen directly in the courtroom but the juvenile court may provide administrative oversight over the “system” in which these activities occur. We recognize that all activities referenced under each element ultimately guide how a given youth makes contact, moves through, and exits the juvenile court system. Regardless of a juvenile court’s structure, the TI-JCSA is designed to provide a comprehensive review of policies and practices. This will require collaboration and communication among key juvenile justice staff and various community level partners.

HOW TO USE THE TRAUMA-INFORMED JUVENILE COURT SELF-ASSESSMENT

1 Forming a Self-Assessment Team

The first step is to form a Self-Assessment Team and consider including representation from the following services/individuals:

- juvenile court judge and administrator
- drug/mental health/other alternative court members
- juvenile probation
- juvenile detention and alternatives to detention/incarceration
- diversion
- schools/education
- law enforcement
- healthcare, behavioral/mental health, and social work professionals
- family/youth representatives and advocates
- prosecutors
- defense attorneys



The process of selecting members of the Self-Assessment Team will vary given the varying structure of juvenile courts. Selecting members of the Self-Assessment Team might also depend on whether the plan is to focus on specific elements (e.g., a court may decide to focus the self-assessment on Elements 2 and 3) or to conduct a comprehensive review with all eight elements. The goal is to select members who can best address the content within each element. As a final outcome of the TI-JCSA is strategic planning, the Self-Assessment Team should include key stakeholders with authority to effect system-level change.

2 Conducting the Self-Assessment—Rating Element Benchmarks

The TI-JCSA contains eight elements, with each element being defined by specific benchmarks that represent appropriate trauma-informed practices (see below for element worksheets). The Self-Assessment Team reviews and rates all benchmarks within each element. Having representation from multiple disciplines/constituencies—reflecting differences in areas of expertise—allows for a collective working knowledge that results in the overall system meeting the benchmarks. For example, juvenile detention, probation, diversion, and behavioral/mental health or social work staff are most likely in the best position to rate benchmarks regarding screening (Element 2). Community-based and court-based healthcare providers, youth and families, and advocates will be key to reviewing and rating benchmarks regarding intervention and case planning (Elements 3B and 6). However, all members of the team should provide input on any criterion for which they have the experience or expertise.

The Self-Assessment Team should determine which elements are to be included in the self-assessment process (e.g., a comprehensive review including all elements or a focused review of select elements such as Elements 2 and 3), and establish an overall timeframe for completing element ratings. Additionally, the team should designate key members to lead the review process for specific elements.

The rating categories were developed to be consistent with the EPIS framework (Exploration, Preparation, Implementation, and Sustainment) that guides technical assistance efforts supporting implementation of evidence-based practices in child welfare and social service settings (see Aarons, Hurlburt, & Horwitz, 2011). Each benchmark is rated using the following scale:

- *Not a Current Practice = No knowledge of a policy, practice, or procedure*
- *Practice Under Consideration = Policy, practice, or procedure has been discussed or considered for development but is not currently part of routine court operations*
- *Informal Practice = Policy, practice, or procedure is not a part of formal court operations but is used on an ad hoc basis by court staff*
- *Formal Practice = Policy, practice, or procedure is a routine part of formal court operations (e.g., relevant staff are trained, supervised, and/or outcomes are monitored)*
- *Not Applicable = Element is not applicable to court operations*

Members of the Self-Assessment Team responsible for reviewing and rating benchmarks are encouraged to document how the element review was conducted and key observations that support their ratings. For example, team members might specify the names of community-based treatment programs that they visited and reviewed (Element 3B), document specific policies they reviewed (Element 1), and key staff and stakeholders they interviewed (Elements 5 and 6).

Each benchmark should receive a single rating by the Self-Assessment Team. When there are divergent views about the best choice for a benchmark rating, the team should carefully consider all viewpoints before settling on a rating that reflects the consensus of the team. If some participants dissent from this rating, their view and the evidence for it should be noted in the narrative conclusions section (see below).

Key observations can be documented on the worksheet (Notes Supporting Rating) and should include concrete findings that justify the benchmark rating. For instance, Element 2 Benchmark 2a (“trauma screening is detailed in procedure and policy”) may be rated as “Practice Under Consideration.” Key observations by the team that supports this rating might include the following:

“ Discussions about developing policy occurred during the past 3 months in administrative meetings but a first draft of written policy has not been submitted to a review committee. ”

These key observations highlight the current state of the benchmark and will be used to inform next steps.

After rating benchmarks and documenting the key observations that support ratings, the team should sum the number of benchmarks rated as Not a Current Practice, Practice Under Consideration, Informal Practice, Formal Practice or Not Applicable at the bottom of the benchmark ratings. This summary will be used to review and provide an overall element rating.



3 Reviewing the Self-Assessment—Element Summary Ratings

After all benchmarks within each element have been rated and summed, the Self-Assessment Team can review these ratings and come to an overall conclusion as to whether practices benchmarked within each element can be described as “trauma-informed” or whether specific elements of trauma-informed care have either not been considered or represent an ad hoc or informal practice that needs to be strengthened. Each element does not receive a final numerical score (i.e., there is no score that can be used to indicate whether a juvenile court is “trauma-informed”). Instead, the Self-Assessment Team uses the EPIS framework to develop an overall conclusion (referred to as Element Summary rating below) regarding the court’s practices within each element. Each element should receive a rating as Exploration, Preparation, Implementation, or Sustainment reflecting the applicable EPIS framework phase. The following table can help the team to link benchmark ratings to the Element Summary rating:

Self-Assessment Element Ratings	EPIS Framework /Phase
Majority of the benchmarks are rated <i>Not a Current Practice</i>	Exploration Phase. In this phase, the juvenile court has not yet considered whether day-to-day activities under the element are trauma-informed, or that the juvenile court is just beginning to consider whether day-to-day activities under the element are trauma-informed, but has no formal plan for how this will be accomplished. Courts should consider the practices and procedures they need to target for system-level improvement. This can involve setting a goal for the key benchmarks to target for strategic planning. The Self-Assessment Team should identify barriers and challenges to changing the current practice. Guidance may be needed from external sources to develop an initial plan for system-level change. Increased knowledge about how trauma-informed practices are working in other court systems can guide initial strategic planning.
Majority of benchmarks are rated as <i>Under Consideration or Informal Practice</i>	Preparation Phase. In this phase, the juvenile court has practices that have involved some level of planning, where barriers and challenges to implementing the practice have already been identified and initial steps have been taken to overcome the barriers. However, there has not been a systematic protocol or consistent effort to implement the practice throughout the system.
Majority of benchmarks are rated as <i>Informal Practice</i>	Preparation Phase. Also in this phase, the juvenile court has trauma-informed practices and procedures that have been operationally defined (e.g., in a working draft) and are being piloted or implemented by a small number of staff or “trauma champions” (i.e., individual staff members who have a strong background, training, and/or commitment to providing trauma-informed care). In order to formally implement the practices or procedures agency- or program-wide, steps of the Preparation Phase likely need to be completed before moving to the next phase.
Majority of the benchmarks are rated as a <i>Formal Practice</i>	Implementation Phase. The juvenile court has formally adopted practices that are supported by policy. There is general knowledge of the “trauma-informed” nature of the practice as evidenced by staff member’s training and working knowledge of the policy or practice.
	Sustainment Phase. The juvenile court has practices and procedures that have been implemented system wide. The practice is considered ingrained and stable throughout the system (i.e., workplace culture characterized as trauma-informed). Practices in the Sustainment phase are those that are regularly monitored through quality assurance processes and there is a commitment by the court system to maintain the practice (e.g., practice is consistent with the mission statement, training is routine and applicable to all staff, funding is secure).

Each element rating form provides space to note the element summary rating and document why the Self-Assessment Team reached this conclusion. The rating form also provides space for the Self-Assessment Team to brainstorm potential Next Steps. These next steps are not a concrete plan for system improvement but reflect the team’s initial strategies for use in Step 4.

Potential next steps are likely to be guided by the element summary rating. There are different tasks involved with implementing trauma-informed practices at different implementation phases. For example, if a large number of benchmark elements have been rated as “Not a Current Practice,” the overall element rating most likely reflects an overall element rating of Exploration.

Potential strategies for system improvement should explicitly address relevant benchmarks and should also be informed by the element summary rating. Below are some recommendations for strategy development that are linked to each EPIS phase (see Walsh, Rolls Reutz, & Williams, 2015).

I

Exploration Phase

If the team made an element survey rating of *Exploration*, some steps for strategy development could include the following:

1. Define your court's needs and goals related to address this element
2. Identify practices that might meet your needs
3. Assess which of those practices might be a good fit for your court
4. Determine obstacles and solutions for implementing these practices

II

Preparation Phase

If the team made an element survey rating of *Preparation*, steps for strategy development could include the following:

1. Obtain buy-in for the practice from leadership and key stakeholders
2. Develop an implementation support system, which might include partnering with experts or developers of the practice you will be implementing or with organizations who have had success with this practice
3. Work with stakeholders (e.g., youth and families, leaders, staff, and other partners) to engage them in the process, ensure that they are supportive of the practice/s and that it is a good fit for them, and identify champions who might be further engaged in the implementation process
4. Identify any potential costs and funding sources
5. Identify outcomes that will be impacted by the practice and prepare to track them
6. Develop timelines for completing implementation tasks that are aligned with your court's calendar

III

Implementation Phase

If the team made an element survey rating of *Implementation*, the team has determined that the practice is a good fit with the court's organization and have worked to engage key stakeholders, identify champions, obtain buy-in, and secure needed resources. Strategy development could include the following:

1. Complete training for all key staff that will be involved in the practice
2. Prepare any materials that will be necessary for implementation
3. Identify internal processes/practices needed to carry out the practice (e.g., deciding who will conduct screening, how internal referral processes for an evidence-based practice will work, on-going coaching and mentoring)
4. Develop a system for monitoring outcomes
5. Discuss how the process might be "scaled-up"—or rolled-out in other programs or related systems

Too often programs implement a practice but do not plan for its continued support, so even successfully implemented practices fail. If the team has made an element survey rating of Sustainment, some steps for further strategy development could include the following:

1. Insure that you have ongoing funding and support for the practice, taking into account needs you might encounter as staff turnover or materials wear out
2. Consider ongoing training needs for new staff, and coaching and supervision for new and continuing staff
3. Monitor fidelity to the practice
4. Establish a regular process for looking at outcomes and assessing whether the practice is working in an optimal way
5. Integrate feedback (from staff, youth and families, administrators, and the data you are gathering) to refine the delivery of the practice to meet the needs of your stakeholders

4 Developing a Plan for System Improvement

Once the Self-Assessment Team has completed benchmark ratings and the element summary rating, and developed strategies for system improvement, the team is now ready to engage in strategic planning. A “Self-Assessment Strategic Planning Worksheet” is provided for each element to guide the Self-Assessment Team’s strategic planning process.

This worksheet facilitates further review of benchmark ratings, identifying prioritized changes that are linked to specific element benchmarks, and developing key tasks to advance the system’s strategic planning efforts. The Self-Assessment Team is encouraged to use a three-step strategic planning process and document the results of each step on the worksheet.

- 1 Prioritize the changes recommended by the Self-Assessment Team. Given the element summary rating, what are the team’s priorities for strategic planning under this element? For example, under Element 2, the team may determine that the key change is to implement universal trauma screening for all youth who come into contact with the juvenile court system. A team may identify any number of changes to implement within each element. Identified changes should be informed by the element summary rating and individual benchmark ratings.
- 2 Develop key tasks (i.e., concrete next steps) for addressing the priorities and outline a timeline for completing tasks. Key tasks involve concrete next steps that can be quantified and tracked. Additionally, key tasks can be linked to and/or assigned to members of an implementation team.
- 3 Finally, the worksheet includes space to establish a proposed timeline to ensure there is a deadline for completing tasks and individual(s) responsible for their completion.



The following are some key considerations that the Self-Assessment Team should keep in mind while developing the strategic plan:

● **Assess your Organizational Capacity**

What resources, and in what quantity, can be devoted to this project right now? Are there gaps in what or who is needed to make changes? Are there ways to leverage existing partnerships to fill gaps or are new partnerships needed? Some organizations receive grants so that they can devote time—and bring in outside resources—to make their program more trauma-informed; others are able to use existing champions, experts, and existing practices (e.g., staff meetings, training days). Determining organizational capacity will inform the prioritization and goal development.

● **Build on Strengths**

Consider other practices that have been implemented successfully in the system, and explore what worked well for that implementation effort. Who supported those practices? How was the practice disseminated? What strategies were utilized to engage and prepare staff and other stakeholders? What resources were utilized?

● **Use the Self-Assessment Team**

Use the Self-Assessment Team as the foundation for developing an Implementation Team. Include individuals who expressed interest in creating a more trauma-informed court. Who needs to be involved to execute tasks that are likely to be impacted by the plan? It is important to include people from all aspects of the court process at all levels of the organization. Consider incorporating youth and families who have been through the court process.

● **Prioritize and Develop Goals**

Identify which element or elements to tackle first. Consider organizational capacity and the amount of resources it will take to move a domain closer to formal practice/sustainment. Also consider that each element informs the other. For example, it might make sense to begin with staff education, as this process is foundational to implementing the other elements and can create buy-in and develop champions for moving forward the work on other elements. Implementing new practices can be a lengthy process; it is better to start with small, attainable goals and garner support through their success.

● **Trauma-Informed Implementation**

Consider that to be a truly trauma-informed court, the process of implementing new practices should also be trauma-informed. It can be quite stressful for staff, providers, and youth and families to learn and become accustomed to new practices; therefore, the process should (1) include stakeholders from all groups impacted by the change; (2) involve frequent and open communication about what is being implemented and why, when, and how the process is working; (3) allow all participants to provide feedback and receive answers to questions or concerns that they might have; and (4) address concerns or suggestions that stakeholders raise.

The TI-JCSA provides a comprehensive approach to implementing sustained trauma-informed practices related to the *Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice System*. As noted in the introduction, the TI-JCSA is intended to provide self-directed guidance toward becoming a trauma-informed court using the EPIS framework. This approach allows courts to choose any element as their starting point and allot the necessary time to collect quality data at their own pace. For this reason, there are no timelines for completing the self-assessment. Courts can choose any number of approaches to completing the TI-JCSA, from completing the entire assessment in a relatively short time period to extending the assessment over a long period of time while focusing on only one element at a time.

Courts should spend time at the outset of the assessment planning process considering how many resources they have to complete the assessment (i.e., staff, time, competing strategic priorities etc.), reasonable timeframes given their available resources, and how to best communicate the assessment scope and plan to staff. Courts have explored varying configurations for self-assessment teams and timelines (see Pickens, Howard, Halladay-Goldman, Cruise, and Watson, 2019). Prior to initiating the self-assessment, courts should orient their staff to the *Essential Elements of a Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice System* and highlight that the assessment is based solely on these eight elements. While other trauma-informed assessments or external audits may focus on relevant content beyond the scope of the TI-JCSA such as the environmental conditions of the court (see Marsh, Dierkhising, Decker, & Rosiak, 2015), the current assessment is intended to create a baseline for moving toward a trauma-informed court and can be used in conjunction with other future assessments and audits.

**REVIEWING AND RATING ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 1:
TRAUMA INFORMED POLICIES AND PRACTICES**

The major focus of this element is to examine both the language of policies and the day-to-day practices so that both policy and practice are consistent. Trauma informed policies and practices promote the juvenile court’s commitment to being trauma-informed. Language in policies and behaviors in practice are driven by a recognition of the adverse effects of trauma on youth, families, and staff and create a framework to support systemic operational practices consistent with a trauma-informed approach. The benchmarks contained in this element complement and reference key domains across all other elements. An overarching review of policies and practices can be beneficial in a number of ways. First, current policies may not reflect the court’s commitment to taking a trauma-informed approach. Second, informal practices that are trauma-informed may not be documented in policies currently in use. Third, practices that are trauma-informed have a better chance of being sustained and supported by all staff when the commitment to trauma-informed approaches are clear in the court’s policies.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO CONSULT/GATHER DATA FROM: Juvenile court judges and court administrators, juvenile detention and probation directors/supervisors, behavioral health program directors/supervisors, court staff responsible for staff training

SUGGESTED DATA COLLECTION STEPS:

- Gather and review all operational policies regarding juvenile court staff training.
- Gather and review all operational policies regarding day-to-day operations of the juvenile court.
- Gather and review all operational policies regarding screening, assessment, and treatment with a specific focus on reviewing how youth and families receive prevention, education, and information on the impact of trauma.
- Observe juvenile court staff trainings to ensure training is consistent with policy.
- Observe the physical plant and day-to-day operations of the juvenile court.
- Interview juvenile court staff (directors, supervisors, line level staff) regarding their awareness, knowledge, education, and use of skills for effectively coping with job-related stress.

TI-JCSA Benchmark Rating Key

<p>Not a Current Practice <i>No knowledge of a policy, practice, or procedure</i></p>	<p>Practice Under Consideration <i>Policy, practice, or procedure has been discussed or considered for development but is not currently part of routine court operations</i></p>	<p>Informal Practice <i>Policy, practice, or procedure is not a part of formal court operations but is used on an ad hoc basis by court staff</i></p>	<p>Formal Practice <i>Policy, practice, or procedure is a routine part of formal court operations (e.g., relevant staff are trained, supervised, and/or outcomes are monitored)</i></p>	<p>Not Applicable <i>Element is not applicable to court operations</i></p>
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This key reflects the operational definitions of benchmark ratings and should be consulted as needed when rating benchmarks in each element.

1 TRAUMA-INFORMED POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Trauma-informed policies and procedures make juvenile courts safer and more effective by ensuring the physical and psychological safety of all youth, family members, and staff and promote their recovery from the adverse effects of trauma.

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
1a. Policies and practices mandate prevention of threats to physical or psychological harm to youth, families, and staff.						
1b. Policies and practices mandate education and training for all staff on the adverse effects of traumatic event exposure and traumatic stress on youth.						
1c. Policies and practices mandate education and training for all staff on appropriate responses to youth that prevent further traumatization and minimize re-activating or exacerbating current traumatic stress reactions.						
1d. Policies and practices mandate that staff provide education and resources to youth and families on the adverse effects of traumatic events and traumatic stress reactions.						
1e. Policies and practices mandate that attorneys who represent youth receive education and training on the effects of trauma on youth and families.						
1f. Policies and practices mandate creation of safe spaces where youth and families can re-group when they experience posttraumatic stress reactions that interfere with their responsible participation in the legal process.						
1g. Policies and practices related to the following activities ensure that system responses do not stigmatize, exclude, or re-traumatize youth.						

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
1h. Policies and practices related to the following activities ensure that system responses do not stigmatize, exclude, or re-traumatize youth.						
1. Use of physical restraints						
2. Shackling practices						
3. Detention decisions						
4. Isolation						
5. Court hearings						
1i. Policies and practices mandate cross-system collaboration.						
1m. Policies and practices mandate how juvenile court practices address the needs of diverse populations of youth and reduce disparities.						
1n. Policies and practices ensure victims of crime engaging with the juvenile court are made aware of available victim assistance resources.						
1o. Policies and practices ensure that juvenile court activities maximize physical and psychological safety for victims of crimes and their families.						
Sum Total of Benchmark Ratings						

Element Summary Rating (Check the applicable rating)	Exploration	Preparation	Implementation	Sustainment	Not Applicable	
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Summary of Evidence Supporting the Element Summary Rating (Note: Please use additional paper to include notes unable to fit in box)

Potential Next Steps (e.g., Benchmarks/Areas to Target for System Improvement; Brainstorm Possible Strategies to Guide System Improvement)

SELF-ASSESSMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHEET – ELEMENT 1

Identify the phase of implementation (element summary rating) that applies to your juvenile court system, according to the EPIS Model:

List the changes recommended by the team in order of priority (identify the benchmark/s associated with each prioritized change area).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the key task(s) to support the changes identified above.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List key implementation team members to support changes/tasks (provide specific names):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the proposed timeline for the completion of key tasks:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

RESOURCES TO GUIDE STRATEGIC PLANNING

Essential Elements of Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice System (Fact sheet)

http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/jj_ee_final.pdf

Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice Roundtable: Current Issues and New Directions in Creating Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice Systems (Brief)

http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/jj_trauma_brief_introduction_final.pdf

Trauma and the Environment of Care in Juvenile Institutions (Brief)

http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/jj_trauma_brief_envirofocare_burrell_final.pdf

**REVIEWING AND RATING ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 2:
IDENTIFICATION/SCREENING OF YOUTH WHO HAVE BEEN TRAUMATIZED**

One of the first tasks to address when developing a trauma-informed court is to identify youth in need of trauma-informed support. The ultimate goal is the universal implementation of a brief, reliable, and valid screening tool during initial contact early in the court process. The aim of a formal screening process is to “rule-in” youth needing further assessment that specifies the impact of the traumatic events and identifies behavioral supports to maintain the youth’s safety. Additionally, formal screening will “rule-out” youth not requiring further assessment, allocating resources to youths most in need of trauma-specific interventions.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO CONSULT/GATHER DATA FROM:

Intake staff, mental health staff/supervisors, court supervisors/administrators for intake, and case management staff

SUGGESTED DATA COLLECTION STEPS:

- Review current mental health screening policy and procedure.
- Determine the trauma screening tool(s) being used, length of time the tool(s) has been in place, and staff satisfaction with the tool(s).
- Discuss with intake staff (and/or observe) the administration, scoring, and post-screen decision-making related to the screening tool(s).
- Review records to examine how screening results are documented and linked post-screening decisions.
- Interview intake staff and supervisors to examine pros/cons of the existing screening process.
- Consult with youth (when possible) who participated in the screening process to assess the youth’s experience and to ascertain whether policies/practices were implemented as intended.
- Consult clinical staff to determine if the screening process is resulting in appropriate referrals.

2 IDENTIFICATION/SCREENING OF YOUTH WHO HAVE BEEN TRAUMATIZED

Carefully timed traumatic stress screening is the standard of care for youth in the juvenile justice system.

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
2a. Trauma screening procedure is detailed in a written policy that establishes it as a required standard practice and describes the level of consent/assent required (i.e., how parent/guardian permission and youth agreement to complete trauma screening is documented)						
2b. Before administering the screen, staff explains: (a) the purpose of the screen; (b) how the results of the screen will be used (i.e., to develop a services plan that enables court/justice programs and personnel to help the youth to manage stress reactions); and (c) who will have access to the screening results.						

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
2c. Adopted trauma screening tools have evidence of reliability and validity with youth in the juvenile justice system and are sensitive to gender/gender identity; ethnocultural, language, and age differences; and disabilities.						
2d. Screening results are used to inform referral decisions for a comprehensive trauma-informed assessment.						
2e. Trauma screening is coordinated among varying components of the justice system so that results are shared and the number of screenings conducted with a youth are minimized.						
2f. Results of the screen (positive or negative) are explained to the youth and caregivers in non-technical language.						
2g. In addition to trauma screening results, staff review collateral sources of information (e.g., prior assessments, legal records, information from caregivers) for evidence of past or current traumatic events in each youth's life and consider this information in decisions (e.g., need for further assessment) and feedback (e.g., discussing the next steps with youth and caregivers).						
2h. Screening process (e.g., instructions, staff training, feedback) is sensitive to diversity (e.g., language preference, culture, gender, identity, and ability).						
2i. Screening results are protected against misuse (e.g., self-incrimination, violation of youth's rights/safety) via policy or memorandum of understanding (MOU).						
Sum Total of Benchmark Ratings						
Element Summary Rating (Check the applicable rating)	Exploration	Preparation	Implementation	Sustainment	Not Applicable	
Summary of Evidence Supporting the Element Summary Rating (Note: Please use additional paper to include notes unable to fit in box)						
Potential Next Steps (e.g., Benchmarks/Areas to Target for System Improvement; Brainstorm Possible Strategies to Guide System Improvement)						

SELF-ASSESSMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHEET – ELEMENT 2

Identify the phase of implementation (element summary rating) that applies to your juvenile court system, according to the EPIS Model:

List the changes recommended by the team in order of priority (identify the benchmark/s associated with each prioritized change area).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the key task(s) to support the changes identified above.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List key implementation team members to support changes/tasks (provide specific names):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the proposed timeline for the completion of key tasks:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

RESOURCES TO GUIDE STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Need for Trauma-Informed Screening and Assessment in Juvenile Justice Settings: Strengths and Limitations of Commonly-Used Instruments (Webinar)
<https://learn.nctsn.org/enrol/index.php?id=283>

Utilizing Trauma Screening and Assessments in Court Decisions: Perspectives from the Bench and Mental Health (Webinar)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/utilizing-trauma-screening-and-assessments-court-decisions-perspectives-bench-and-mental>

The Use of Web-Based Screening for Trauma and Associated Disorders in Juvenile Justice Involved Youth (Webinar)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/use-web-based-screening-trauma-and-associated-disorders-juvenile-justice-involved-youth>

Victimization and Juvenile Offending (Fact sheet)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/victimization-and-juvenile-offending>

NCTSN Measures Review Database
<https://www.nctsn.org/treatments-and-practices/screening-and-assessments/measure-reviews/all-measure-reviews>

**REVIEWING AND RATING ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 3A:
CLINICAL ASSESSMENT FOR YOUTH AFFECTED BY TRAUMA**

Youth identified in the screening process should receive a follow-up assessment with the results delineating the need for trauma-specific treatment (e.g., treatments that directly address post-traumatic stress symptoms) and informing case planning. Assessments should be conducted by qualified mental health professionals using assessment methods that are reliable and valid and address the frequency, severity, and impact of prior traumatic events and current traumatic stress symptoms on the youth’s functioning. Assessments may also indicate the effects of other trauma-related emotional and behavioral impairments specifying both active treatment and case management opinions and recommendations.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO CONSULT/GATHER DATA FROM:

Mental health staff (i.e., employed by the court or contracted community providers) who conduct post-screening clinical assessments of trauma-exposed youth; juvenile justice staff who receive, review, and incorporate assessment findings into case plans; youth and family/caregivers who have participated in the clinical assessment process

SUGGESTED DATA COLLECTION STEPS:

- Obtain qualifications and training of mental health staff who conduct post-screening clinical assessments.
- Interview mental health staff that regularly conducts assessments to determine trauma-specific training and knowledge of assessment practices.
- Systematically examine the content of clinical assessment reports of youth who were referred for a clinical assessment after being “screened-in” by trauma screening procedures.
- Interview juvenile court staff (e.g., detention and probation case managers) that are consumers of the assessments to determine consumer satisfaction with the conclusions and recommendations in the clinical assessments.
- Interview youth and families regarding their perceptions of the usefulness and experience of the clinical assessment process.

3A CLINICAL ASSESSMENT FOR YOUTH AFFECTED BY TRAUMA

Trauma-specific clinical assessment and trauma-informed prevention and behavioral health services are the standard of care for all youth identified in the screening process as impaired by posttraumatic stress reactions.

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
3Aa. Youth who are identified as potentially in need of trauma-specific or trauma-informed services from screening are referred for a follow-up trauma-specific clinical assessment.						
3Ab. Trauma-specific assessments are conducted by qualified mental health professionals who have training and expertise in evidence-based assessment of posttraumatic stress with justice-involved youths and their families.						

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
3Ac. Trauma-specific assessments are based on instruments with known reliability and validity (i.e., evidence-based) for identifying past and current exposures to traumatic events and level and severity of posttraumatic stress symptoms with justice-involved youth.						
3Ad. Trauma-specific assessments identify level, severity, and impairment of trauma-related emotional (e.g., depression, anxiety) and behavioral (e.g., aggression, substance use) difficulties with justice-involved youth and their families.						
3Ae. Trauma-specific assessments identify how past/current trauma exposure and posttraumatic stress symptoms impact associated emotional/behavioral health symptoms.						
3Af. Trauma-specific assessments identify how past/current trauma exposure and posttraumatic stress symptoms impact criminogenic risk/needs and responsivity factors.						
Sum Total of Benchmark Ratings						

Element Summary Rating (Check the applicable rating)	Exploration	Preparation	Implementation	Sustainment	Not Applicable	

Summary of Evidence Supporting the Element Summary Rating (Note: Please use additional paper to include notes unable to fit in box)

Potential Next Steps (e.g., Benchmarks/Areas to Target for System Improvement; Brainstorm Possible Strategies to Guide System Improvement)

SELF-ASSESSMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHEET – ELEMENT 3A

Identify the phase of implementation (element summary rating) that applies to your juvenile court system, according to the EPIS Model:

List the changes recommended by the team in order of priority (identify the benchmark/s associated with each prioritized change area).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the key task(s) to support the changes identified above.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List key implementation team members to support changes/tasks (provide specific names):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the proposed timeline for the completion of key tasks:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

RESOURCES TO GUIDE STRATEGIC PLANNING

Screening and Assessment: Considerations for Implementation (Fact sheet)

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/screening-and-assessment-considerations-implementation>

Assessing Exposure to Psychological Trauma and Posttraumatic Stress in the Juvenile Justice Population (Fact sheet) <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/assessing-exposure-psychological-trauma-and-post-traumatic-stress-juvenile-justice>

PTSD and Risk Assessments for Juvenile Court Evaluations (Webinar)

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/ptsd-and-risk-assessments-juvenile-court-evaluations>

REVIEWING AND RATING ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 3B: CLINICAL INTERVENTION FOR YOUTH AFFECTED BY TRAUMA

Justice-involved youth who are determined (by screening or assessment) to have reactions to trauma reminders and/or trauma-related impairments are referred to appropriate interventions that match their trauma-specific needs. Qualified mental health professionals use effective trauma-specific interventions and deliver treatment that is tailored and responsive to the unique characteristics and needs of youth and families. The full continuum of care for justice-involved youth (e.g., prevention, support services, behavioral health services addressing criminogenic needs, and trauma-related emotional and behavioral problems) is informed by an understanding of the impact of traumatic events and posttraumatic stress symptoms on youth functioning.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO CONSULT/GATHER DATA FROM:

Mental health staff (i.e., employed by the court or contracted community providers) who deliver interventions to trauma-exposed youth and their families; juvenile justice staff responsible for developing and monitoring case plans; youth and family/caregivers who have participated in treatment services

SUGGESTED DATA COLLECTION STEPS:

- Obtain qualifications and training of mental health staff that deliver interventions to trauma-exposed youth and their families.
 - Obtain program descriptions of agency services to review the types of treatment modalities and interventions used to provide services to youth. Note that benchmarks for assessing interventions can be used flexibly to either assess individual interventions or more broadly to assess how the court collectively responds when need is identified.
 - Interview mental health staff that deliver interventions to determine trauma-specific training and knowledge of effective treatment practices.
 - Systematically examine the content of juvenile justice and/or multidisciplinary case plans to determine if recommendations from clinical assessments are incorporated into case plans with appropriate treatment services matched to the identified needs.
 - Interview youth and families regarding their perceptions and experience of the usefulness of treatment services.
-

3B CLINICAL INTERVENTION FOR TRAUMA-IMPAIRED YOUTH

Trauma-specific prevention and behavioral health services are the standard of care for all youth identified as impaired by posttraumatic stress reactions in the assessment process.

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
3Ba. Based on assessment recommendations, youth recommended for trauma-informed and/or trauma-specific treatments are referred to appropriate services matching the recommendations.						
3Bb. Youth in need of trauma-specific treatment are referred to behavioral health providers who have training and expertise in traumatic stress interventions proven to be effective with justice-involved youth.						
3Bc. Trauma-specific interventions are tailored and responsive to each individual youth and family, with respect to their preferences and personal or cultural characteristics (e.g., language, intellectual ability, community and socioeconomic resources).						
3Bd. Based on assessment recommendations, youth receive trauma-specific services that are designed to manage and/or reduce post-traumatic stress reactions.						
3Be. Based on assessment recommendations, youth receive trauma-specific services that are made explicit in a multidisciplinary service plan that is communicated to all relevant court personnel (e.g., judge, probation officer) and other service providers.						
3Bf. When youth are referred/placed in juvenile justice programming (e.g., detention, diversion, probation, residential treatment), program staff receive recommendations for trauma informed-services from prior assessments or from prior service plans and incorporate those into the current services plan and practices.						

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
3Bg. Providers of services targeting known criminogenic risks/needs (e.g., negative peer group affiliation, impulsivity, substance use) consider the impact of traumatic event exposure and traumatic stress symptoms on youth's criminogenic risk/needs.						
3Bh. Trauma interventions delivered to youth are monitored for quality assurance and fidelity.						
3Bi. Multidisciplinary service plans are regularly monitored and changed (e.g., 60-day-review) to evaluate progress or lack of progress.						
Sum Total of Benchmark Ratings						

Element Summary Rating (Check the applicable rating)	Exploration	Preparation	Implementation	Sustainment	Not Applicable	

Summary of Evidence Supporting the Element Summary Rating (Note: Please use additional paper to include notes unable to fit in box)

Potential Next Steps (e.g., Benchmarks/Areas to Target for System Improvement; Brainstorm Possible Strategies to Guide System Improvement)

SELF-ASSESSMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHEET – ELEMENT 3B

Identify the phase of implementation (element summary rating) that applies to your juvenile court system, according to the EPIS Model:

List the changes recommended by the team in order of priority (identify the benchmark/s associated with each prioritized change area).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the key task(s) to support the changes identified above.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List key implementation team members to support changes/tasks (provide specific names):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the proposed timeline for the completion of key tasks:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

RESOURCES TO GUIDE STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Need for Trauma-Informed Screening and Assessment in Juvenile Justice Settings: Strengths and Limitations of Commonly-Used Instruments (Webinar)
<https://learn.nctsn.org/enrol/index.php?id=283>

Utilizing Trauma Screening and Assessments in Court Decisions: Perspectives from the Bench and Mental Health (Webinar)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/utilizing-trauma-screening-and-assessments-court-decisions-perspectives-bench-and-mental>

Toward Trauma-Informed System Change: A TARGETed Approach (Webinar) <https://learn.nctsn.org/enrol/index.php?id=258>

Evidence-Informed Intervention for Post-traumatic stress Problems with Youth Involved in the Juvenile Justice System (Fact sheet)
https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/trauma_focused_interventions_for_youth_in_jj.pdf

Trauma-Informed Assessment and Intervention (Brief) <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/trauma-informed-assessment-and-intervention>

TARGET-A: Trauma Affect Regulation: Guidelines for Education and Therapy for Adolescents and Pre-Adolescents (General Information and Culture Specific Information Fact Sheet) <https://www.nctsn.org/interventions/trauma-affect-regulation-guide-education-and-therapy>

Sanctuary Model (General Information and Culture Specific Information Fact Sheet) <https://www.nctsn.org/interventions/sanctuary-model>

Trauma Grief Component Therapy for Adolescents (General Information and Culture Specific Information Fact Sheet)
<https://www.nctsn.org/interventions/trauma-and-grief-component-therapy-adolescents>

NCTSN Empirically Supported Treatments and Promising Practices
<https://www.nctsn.org/treatments-and-practices/trauma-treatments>

**REVIEWING AND RATING ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 4:
TRAUMA-INFORMED PROGRAMMING AND STAFF EDUCATION**

Developing a common language and set of practices for a trauma-informed approach involves training and ongoing staff education that clearly defines the trauma-informed approach in the juvenile court system. A foundational training for defining trauma provides the basic tools necessary to engage others in a trauma-informed manner and ongoing staff education sustains integration of trauma-informed principles in every staff member’s job responsibilities.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO CONSULT/GATHER DATA FROM: Minimum of one representative from each role comprising the juvenile court staff (e.g., court personnel, case management, detention, probation, support services, administrators); a representative supervisor and non-supervisor (i.e., line staff) should participate and inform the team.

SUGGESTED DATA COLLECTION STEPS:

- Inventory current trainings and staff education programming.
- Identify degree to which trainings address staff education needs related to trauma by surveying staff.
- Utilize inventory of trainings and survey results from staff to identify current gaps in trauma-informed training needs.
- Consult with expert clinical and juvenile justice staff to identify best trainings, continuing education, and practices to address gaps in training needs.
- Consult with youth (e.g., youth advisory group) regarding the trauma-related programming needs and perceptions of utility of current programming.
- Use recommendations from expert clinical and juvenile justice staff to assess how close current practices are to achieving these recommendations. Use this information to rate each benchmark.

4 TRAUMA-INFORMED PROGRAMMING AND STAFF EDUCATION

Trauma-informed education, resources, and programs are the standard of care throughout all stages of the juvenile justice system and for all staff, judges, administrators, and attorneys.

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
4a. Juvenile court staff/judges /administrators/attorneys are provided evidence-based training and resources about the effects of trauma exposure on youth and families.						
4b. Juvenile court staff/judges /administrators/attorneys are provided evidence-based training and resources about the nature of traumatic stress reactions on youth and families.						
4c. Juvenile court staff/judges/ administrators/attorneys are provided evidence-based training and resources about recognizing their secondary traumatic stress.						

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
4d. Trauma-informed training begins at the onset of employment for all juvenile court staff/judges /administrators/attorneys and continues on a regular basis.						
4e. Trauma-informed training provides skills relevant to the staff person's role (e.g., judge, attorney, juvenile probation/detention officer) and setting (e.g., court, detention, probation, diversion).						
4f. Juvenile court staff receive training and resources on the unique adverse effects of personal, institutional, and historical trauma on vulnerable groups including:						
1. Youth of color						
2. Youth from refugee or immigrant families						
3. LGBTQ-GNC youth.						
4. Youth with developmental disabilities						
5. Girls and women						
6. Youth who are homeless						
7. Youth who have been commercially/sexually exploited or trafficked						
8. Youth who are gang-involved						
9. Youth who are parents						
Sum Total of Benchmark Ratings						
Element Summary Rating (Check the applicable rating)	Exploration	Preparation	Implementation	Sustainment	Not Applicable	
Summary of Evidence Supporting the Element Summary Rating (Note: Please use additional paper to include notes unable to fit in box)						
Potential Next Steps (e.g., Benchmarks/Areas to Target for System Improvement; Brainstorm Possible Strategies to Guide System Improvement)						

SELF-ASSESSMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHEET – ELEMENT 4

Identify the phase of implementation (element summary rating) that applies to your juvenile court system, according to the EPIS Model:

List the changes recommended by the team in order of priority (identify the benchmark/s associated with each prioritized change area).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the key task(s) to support the changes identified above.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List key implementation team members to support changes/tasks (provide specific names):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the proposed timeline for the completion of key tasks:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

RESOURCES TO GUIDE STRATEGIC PLANNING

Think Trauma: A Training for Staff in Juvenile Justice Residential Settings (Training curriculum)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/think-trauma-training-staff-juvenile-justice-residential-settings>

Victimization and Juvenile Offending (Fact sheet)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/victimization-and-juvenile-offending>

Helping Traumatized Children: Tips for Judges (Tip sheet)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/helping-traumatized-children-tips-judges>

Ten Things Every Juvenile Court Judge Should Know About Trauma and Delinquency (TA bulletin)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/ten-things-every-juvenile-court-judge-should-know-about-trauma-and-delinquency>

NCTSN Bench Cards for the Trauma-Informed Judge (Bench cards)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/nctsn-bench-cards-trauma-informed-judge>

Juvenile and Family Court Journal Special Issues on Child Trauma (Journal articles)
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/17556988/59/4>

Trauma: What Child Welfare Attorneys Should Know (Resource guide)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/trauma-what-child-welfare-attorneys-should-know>

Birth Parents with Trauma histories and the Child Welfare Systems: A Guide for Judges and Attorneys (Fact sheet)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/birth-parents-trauma-histories-and-child-welfare-system-guide-judges-and-attorneys>

Trauma in the Lives of Gang-Involved Youth: Tips for Volunteers and Community Organizations (Tip sheet)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/trauma-lives-gang-involved-youth-tips-volunteers-and-community-organizations>

Trauma Informed Legal Advocacy: A Resource for Juvenile Defense Attorneys (Resource guide)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/trauma-informed-legal-advocacy-a-resource-for-juvenile-defense-attorneys>

**REVIEWING AND RATING ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 5:
PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS (STS)**

Stress related to working in a juvenile-justice setting can manifest in a variety of ways that interfere with job performance. Addressing secondary traumatic stress (stress related to working with individuals displaying traumatic stress reactions) and promoting self-care is essential to preventing job attrition and fostering professional job satisfaction. When juvenile courts provide non-punitive mechanisms to meet these needs, staff are optimally equipped to perform their job duties.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO CONSULT/GATHER DATA FROM:

Supervisor and minimum of one non-supervisor staff representative from each staffing role (court personnel, case management staff, detention staff, probation staff, support service staff, administrative staff)

SUGGESTED DATA COLLECTION STEPS:

- Review current practices and policies to address staff self-care needs including protocols for supporting staff after exposure to highly stressful work experiences.
- Survey supervisory staff from each staffing role (court personnel, case management staff, detention staff, probation staff, support service staff, administrative staff).
- Survey non-supervisor staff representatives from each staffing role (court personnel, case management staff, detention staff, probation staff, support service staff, administrative staff)
- Identify gaps in addressing staff needs based on both perceived and actual implementation challenges.
- Use gaps to identify areas of improvement and to determine rating for benchmarks.

5 PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS (STS)

Juvenile court administrators and staff recognize and respond to the adverse effects of secondary traumatic stress (STS) in the workplace in order to support workforce safety, effectiveness, and resilience.

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
5a. Juvenile court staff/judges /administrators/attorneys are provided training and resources to identify when they or their co-workers are experiencing STS.						
5b. Juvenile court staff/judges /administrators/attorneys are provided training and resources in effective strategies to prevent and cope with STS.						
5c. Juvenile court staff/judges/ administrators/attorneys experiencing STS are provided resources to access help from qualified behavioral health providers who have expertise in evidence-based assessment and treatment of posttraumatic stress.						

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
5d. Juvenile court staff receiving services for STS are ensured that privacy and confidentiality are maintained and that services are provided without adverse impact on employment status.						
5e. Juvenile court administration has policies and procedures that consistently encourage and support appropriate recognition and response to STS.						
5f. Juvenile court develops and sustains a program that provides timely, systematic, and effective stress management and psychosocial (separately from operational) interventions after critical incidents (e.g., assaults, self-harm, suicide attempts).						
Sum Total of Benchmark Ratings						

Element Summary Rating (Check the applicable rating)	Exploration	Preparation	Implementation	Sustainment	Not Applicable	

Summary of Evidence Supporting the Element Summary Rating (Note: Please use additional paper to include notes unable to fit in box)

Potential Next Steps (e.g., Benchmarks/Areas to Target for System Improvement; Brainstorm Possible Strategies to Guide System Improvement)

SELF-ASSESSMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHEET – ELEMENT 5

Identify the phase of implementation (element summary rating) that applies to your juvenile court system, according to the EPIS Model:

List the changes recommended by the team in order of priority (identify the benchmark/s associated with each prioritized change area).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the key task(s) to support the changes identified above.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List key implementation team members to support changes/tasks (provide specific names):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the proposed timeline for the completion of key tasks:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

RESOURCES TO GUIDE STRATEGIC PLANNING

Secondary Traumatic Stress: A Fact Sheet for Organizations Employing Community Violence Workers (Fact sheet)

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/secondary-traumatic-stress-fact-sheet-organizations-employing-community-violence-workers>

Secondary Traumatic Stress: A Fact Sheet for Child Serving Professionals (Fact sheet)

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/secondary-traumatic-stress-fact-sheet-child-serving-professionals>

**REVIEWING AND RATING ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 6:
TRAUMA-INFORMED PARTNERING WITH YOUTH AND FAMILIES**

A trauma-informed juvenile court system ensures that youth and families are collaborative partners in designing case plans, determining the types of case management and rehabilitation services that are maximally effective. Collaborative partnering promotes meaningful levels of youth/family autonomy and control over service planning and usage, while also balancing youth accountability and responsibility. Youth and their families are less likely to experience powerlessness and isolation and more likely to use posttraumatic coping strategies when they are engaged as collaborative partners with juvenile court and behavioral health staff. Ultimately, trauma-informed partnering can inform service planning and delivery. As such, collaborative partnering can reduce stigma, avoid triggering/retraumatizing youth and families, and potentially contribute to greater accountability and reductions in future court involvement.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO CONSULT/GATHER DATA FROM:

Justice-involved youth and their adult family members/caregivers, juvenile court personnel who regularly engage youth and their families (e.g., district attorney, defense counsel, detention staff, probation staff, behavioral health staff)

SUGGESTED DATA COLLECTION STEPS:

- Interviews with youth and their adult family members/caregivers regarding their experiences with key decision-points in the juvenile justice process (e.g., disposition hearing, detention/probation intake, case planning, case reviews).
- Interviews with juvenile court staff to determine ways that staff work to engage youth and families at key points in the juvenile justice process.
- Interviews with behavioral health staff responsible for service delivery to determine how families are engaged in the treatment planning process.
- Observe a case review meeting and/or multidisciplinary treatment team to observe how the youth and family’s voice is represented in the team meeting process.

6 TRAUMA-INFORMED PARTNERING WITH YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Trauma-informed juvenile courts ensure that youth and families engage as partners in all juvenile justice programming and therapeutic services.

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
6a. Juvenile court dispositions consider the need to mitigate the adverse effects of post-traumatic stress and related behavioral health problems.						
6b. Juvenile court service planning (e.g., probation case planning) includes input from youth and families/caregivers and is developed to mitigate the adverse effects of post-traumatic stress and related behavioral health problems.						

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
6c. Youth and families/caregivers are provided resources that are meaningful and comprehensible to them about the adverse effects of posttraumatic stress and how services can assist youths in managing and reducing posttraumatic stress reactions during the case planning process.						
6d. Case planning engages youth and families/caregivers in collaborative problem-solving to reduce obstacles to effective engagement in treatment services and juvenile justice programming (e.g., transportation, location, language).						
6e. Case planning includes and/or references how supportive adults identified by the youth and families/caregivers can assist and support the youth's engagement in treatment services and juvenile justice programming.						
6f. The court and DA's office partner with the victim and victim's family or caregivers to inform them of case resolution and develop a plan that considers their psychological and physical safety.						
6g. The court actively seeks out and includes youth and families or caregivers input in order to improve the experience, services, and outcomes.						
Sum Total of Benchmark Ratings						

Element Summary Rating (Check the applicable rating)	Exploration	Preparation	Implementation	Sustainment	Not Applicable	
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Summary of Evidence Supporting the Element Summary Rating (Note: Please use additional paper to include notes unable to fit in box)

Potential Next Steps (e.g., Benchmarks/Areas to Target for System Improvement; Brainstorm Possible Strategies to Guide System Improvement)

SELF-ASSESSMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHEET – ELEMENT 6

Identify the phase of implementation (element summary rating) that applies to your juvenile court system, according to the EPIS Model:

List the changes recommended by the team in order of priority (identify the benchmark/s associated with each prioritized change area).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the key task(s) to support the changes identified above.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List key implementation team members to support changes/tasks (provide specific names):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the proposed timeline for the completion of key tasks:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

RESOURCES TO GUIDE STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Role of Family Engagement in Creating Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice Systems (Brief)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/role-family-engagement-creating-trauma-informed-juvenile-justice-systems>

Pathways to Partnerships with Youth and Families in the NCTSN (Special resource)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/pathways-partnerships-youth-and-families-national-child-traumatic-stress-network>

Your Child and Gangs: What You Need to Know About Trauma (Fact sheet)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/your-child-and-gangs-what-you-need-know-about-trauma-tips-parents>

**REVIEWING AND RATING ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 7:
TRAUMA-INFORMED CROSS-SYSTEM COLLABORATION**

Youth involved with the juvenile justice system have contact with several other child-serving systems that are responsible for youth behavioral outcomes. Whether a system to which all youth are connected (e.g., schools) or a system that only a portion of youth use (e.g., child welfare), maximizing collaboration between or among systems can potentially increase effectiveness and continuity of interventions employed to address youths’ behavioral challenges. Effective cross-system planning and collaboration can also help to repair the social contract and lack of faith in community systems that occurs with many youths who have experienced repeated or chronic trauma.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO CONSULT/GATHER DATA FROM:

Representatives from the child welfare system, school system, behavioral health system, law enforcement, and justice system—individuals with decision-making ability within their respective system

SUGGESTED DATA COLLECTION STEPS:

- Review current policies and procedures for communication with non-justice child-serving systems.
- Identify specific departments/staffing groups within your justice setting that would benefit from interaction with an external system (e.g., case management gathering information from school or child welfare).
- Outline expected outcomes from partnerships (e.g., partnership facilitates use of services in community following discharge).
- Survey representatives from each of these specific departments/staffing groups (within your justice setting) and assess the degree to which interaction/collaboration occurs with external systems (e.g., school, child welfare) and achieves goals.
- Use these responses to rate benchmarks.

7 TRAUMA-INFORMED CROSS SYSTEM COLLABORATION

Cross system collaboration involves partnerships that facilitate the provision of continuous integrated services to justice-involved youth who are experiencing posttraumatic stress problems.

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
7a. Policies and programs that are related to trauma involve partnerships and input from the following:						
1. Schools						
2. Law Enforcement						
3. Child Welfare						
4. Healthcare						
5. Behavioral Healthcare						
6. Community organizations						
7. Youth/Families						
8. Advocates						

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
7b. Partnership addresses ways to prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice system—reducing their risk of further exposure to traumatic events and/or exacerbating posttraumatic stress reactions.						
7c. Partnership identifies youth involved in multiple systems to coordinate efficient and timely access to trauma screening, trauma assessment, and trauma treatment.						
7d. Partnership identifies strategies to ensure youth and families successfully transition across systems and settings preserving access to trauma-informed or trauma-specific treatments and services that are working well and discontinuing those that are not working well for youth and families.						
7e. Partnership develops a communication system that allows for the sharing of information among systems while appropriately maintaining confidentiality of youth.						
7f. The court partners with the prosecutor's office to ensure that the trauma-related needs of the victims and their families are being adequately addressed.						
7g. A partnership with the prosecutor's office ensures that, at the court, there is a comfortable physical space for victims and their families to wait that is separate from the space used by the accused youth and family.						
Sum Total of Benchmark Ratings						

Element Summary Rating (Check the applicable rating)	Exploration	Preparation	Implementation	Sustainment	Not Applicable	
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Summary of Evidence Supporting the Element Summary Rating (Note: Please use additional paper to include notes unable to fit in box)

Potential Next Steps (e.g., Benchmarks/Areas to Target for System Improvement; Brainstorm Possible Strategies to Guide System Improvement)

SELF-ASSESSMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHEET – ELEMENT 7

Identify the phase of implementation (element summary rating) that applies to your juvenile court system, according to the EPIS Model:

List the changes recommended by the team in order of priority (identify the benchmark/s associated with each prioritized change area).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the key task(s) to support the changes identified above.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List key implementation team members to support changes/tasks (provide specific names):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the proposed timeline for the completion of key tasks:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

RESOURCES TO GUIDE STRATEGIC PLANNING

Testifying in Court About Trauma: How to Prepare (Tip sheet)

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/testifying-court-about-trauma-how-prepare>

Testifying in Court About Trauma: The Court Hearing (Tip sheet)

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/testifying-court-about-trauma-court-hearing>

Testifying in Court About Trauma: Following the Hearing (Tip sheet)

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/testifying-court-about-trauma-following-hearing>

NCTSN Bench Cards for the Trauma-Informed Judge (Bench card)

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/nctsn-bench-cards-trauma-informed-judge>

Utilizing Trauma Screening and Assessments in Court Decisions: Perspectives from the Bench and Mental Health (Webinar) <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/utilizing-trauma-screening-and-assessments-court-decisions-perspectives-bench-and-mental>

Crossover Youth and Trauma-Informed Practice (Webinar series)

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/crossover-youth-and-trauma-informed-practice>

Cross-System Collaboration (Brief)

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/cross-system-collaboration>

Trauma-informed Collaborations Among Juvenile Justice and Other Child-Serving Systems: An Update (Special resource) <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/249840.pdf>

**REVIEWING AND RATING ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 8:
TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES TO ADDRESS DISPARITIES AND DIVERSITY**

Ensuring safety within a juvenile justice setting is a primary responsibility of court and juvenile justice staff. Justice-involved youth comprising vulnerable populations or groups disproportionately impacted by adverse life events (e.g., LGBTQ, ethnic minorities, disabled youth) are at greater risk for compromised safety and encounter more barriers to effectively engaging in decisions about their welfare and rehabilitation. Ensuring that justice-involved youth have equal opportunities to engage in services, to access resources supporting their rehabilitation, and to experience court practices supporting safety are key to reducing disparities and adequately addressing safety concerns related to having diverse youth in your setting.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO CONSULT/GATHER DATA FROM:

Ombudsman, case management, youth representative, administrator, parent/family member, juvenile justice staff responsible for developing and monitoring case plans.

SUGGESTED DATA COLLECTION STEPS:

- Review policies and procedures for addressing disparities and diversity in court.
- Coordinate with oversight agencies (e.g., government agencies accepting reports of abuse) and ombudsmen to compile and review complaints over past 3-5 years.
- Interview and/or survey youth, family, and juvenile justice staff to assess their perception of actions taken to protect vulnerable youth and their perceptions of gaps in addressing disparities and supporting diversity.
- Review responses with administrators, judges, and other supervisors to further corroborate perceptions of youth, family, and juvenile justice staff.

8 TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES TO ADDRESS DISPARITIES AND DIVERSITY

Trauma-informed juvenile courts ensure that their practices and policies address the diverse and unique needs of all groups of youth and do not result in disparities related to race, ethnicity, gender, gender-identity, sexual orientation, age, intellectual and developmental level, or socioeconomic background.

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
8a. Juvenile court staff receive training and resources on trauma-responsive strategies addressing vulnerable groups including the following:						
1. Gender/gender identity						
2. Sexual orientation						
3. Developmental level						
4. Race, ethnicity and national origin						
5. Physical ability						
6. Other vulnerable population: Specify population here						

	Not a Current Practice	Practice Under Consideration	Informal Practice	Formal Practice	Not Applicable	Notes Supporting Rating
8b. Juvenile court decision-making is aided by validated and trauma-responsive risk/needs assessments at key decision points (e.g., detention, disposition, case planning) to reduce racial/ethnic disparities (e.g., disproportionate minority contact).						
8c. Juvenile court staff provide opportunities for youth to receive prosocial support from youth and adults of similar gender/gender identity, sexual identity, age, race, and developmental level.						
8d. Juvenile court staff ensure that all youth are able to comprehend and meaningfully engage in decision-making related to their disposition and case planning to the best of their ability.						
8e. Juvenile court staff ensure that all youth are able to comprehend and meaningfully engage in treatment services and juvenile justice programming to the best of their ability.						
8f. Juvenile court staff ensure that language barriers and cognitive limitations do not effect traumatic stress screening or comprehensive assessments.						
8g. Juvenile court staff ensure that language barriers and cognitive limitations do not effect access to trauma-specific and trauma-informed treatment services.						
Sum Total of Benchmark Ratings						
Element Summary Rating (Check the applicable rating)	Exploration	Preparation	Implementation	Sustainment	Not Applicable	
Summary of Evidence Supporting the Element Summary Rating (Note: Please use additional paper to include notes unable to fit in box)						
Potential Next Steps (e.g., Benchmarks/Areas to Target for System Improvement; Brainstorm Possible Strategies to Guide System Improvement)						

SELF-ASSESSMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHEET – ELEMENT 8

Identify the phase of implementation (element summary rating) that applies to your juvenile court system, according to the EPIS Model:

List the changes recommended by the team in order of priority (identify the benchmark/s associated with each prioritized change area).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the key task(s) to support the changes identified above.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List key implementation team members to support changes/tasks (provide specific names):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List the proposed timeline for the completion of key tasks:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

RESOURCES TO GUIDE STRATEGIC PLANNING

Trauma Among Girls in the Juvenile Justice System (Fact sheet)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/trauma-among-girls-juvenile-justice-system>

Racial Disparities in the Juvenile Justice System: A Legacy of Trauma (Brief)
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/racial-disparities-and-juvenile-justice-system-legacy-trauma>

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