**EXAMPLES of Strategies to Help Facilitators Use a Trauma Informed**

**Approach to function-Based Assessment and Intervention Planning**

It is important to remember that discussing problems or challenges a child is having can be very stressful for parents, the student, and staff. To create a supportive atmosphere, apply the principles of a trauma-informed approach through all aspects of the assessment and planning process. The following provides *examples* of strategies that you can use to make the process as collaborative and supportive as possible.

Learn more about trauma informed practices at:

* [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](https://www.nctsn.org/)
  + <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/child-trauma-toolkit-educators>
* [National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative (SAMHSA)](https://www.samhsa.gov/child-trauma)

**Examples of Strategies to Create a Safe Experience**

* Use objective and neutral language when discussion
* Explain how the information from the interview will be used in the information gathering process.
* Share an (fictious) example of a behavior intervention plan so that the parent can see an example of the end result.
* Be sensitive to the possible influence of a power imbalance between school personnel and the parent/caregiver. The parent/caregiver should be confident that responding to interview questions will not negatively influence the education their child receives
* Begin discussions by discussing the student’s strengths, positive qualities, and gifts
* Explain how the information assessments, interviews, discussions will be used to figure out strategies to help student.
* Stay alert for signs of stress and make adjustments based needs
* Ask the parent what they need to feel comfortable with the process
* Ask the student’s teachers and parents for suggestions / strategies to help the student feel comfortable during discussions (e.g., during an interview to gather information)
* Follow-up with the student after meetings, interviews, discussions (check that they are okay, see if they have anything else they thought about afterwards)
* Build rapport first. Help the student, parent/caregiver and staff feel comfortable before sensitive discussions
* When talking with the student, reassure them that they are not in trouble. That the discussion is an opportunity to listen to their point of view.

**Examples of Strategies to Make the Process Transparent**

* Start meetings with a review of what process steps have been implemented thus far and what is happening next
* Share/send information and materials ahead of scheduled meetings. For example, when interviewing a parent, provide the interview questions ahead of the scheduled interview
* Reassure parents that the outcome of the process is to arrive at supports and strategies to help their child going forward.
* Clarify with the parent/caregiver and student what information they prefer remain private within the discussion, when and why you break confidentiality, and what information is okay to share with other team members.
* Have a pre-meeting with the student to describe the interview, share the questions, and to ask them what they will need to feel comfortable during the discussion.
* Clarify with the student what information they prefer remain private within the discussion and what information is okay to share with other team members. Also clarify when and why you would break confidentiality.
* Share an (fictious) example of a behavior intervention plan so that the parent can see an example of the end result

**Examples of Strategies to Foster Empowerment, Voice & Choice in the Process**

* Prompt parents to let you know if there are questions they prefer not to discuss ahead of the meeting so they don’t feel put on the spot during the meeting.
* Offer the parent/student a choice of which personnel can facilitate an information gathering interview (who do they feel most comfortable with).
* Offer opportunities to ‘pass’ on questions.
* Offer opportunities for parents/students to ask questions or to share additional information not covered in the questions.
* Offer a choice in how the interview is conducted (by phone, video conference or in person).
* Check-in for approval to move forward with the next question during an interview to gather information
* Ask the parent/student what they need to be comfortable during the interview.
* Prompt the parent/student to let you know if there are questions they prefer not to discuss ahead of the meeting so they don’t feel put on the spot during the meeting.

**Examples of Strategies to Encourage Peer Support**

* Offer, encourage the parent/student to include anyone they would like in the interview (e.g., “Who would you like to join us for the discussion? Please feel free to invite anyone that is a support to you to join our meeting”).
* Help the parent/caregiver to find information about peer support options (e.g., support groups, parent advocacy, etc.)
* Help the student to connect to peer support options (e.g., support groups, peer mentoring, etc.)

**Examples of Strategies for Setting a Tone for Collaboration and Partnership**

* Build a rapport ahead of the meeting. Make one or two check-in phone calls to see if the parent has any questions, has received the materials. Multiple positive contacts will help to build a partnership.
* Reflect the value that the parent is a partner in arriving at strategies and supports for their child (“Together we can arrive at the right combination of supports for Micah”).
* Use paraphrasing to restate information provided to ensure the accuracy of your interpretation.
* Solicit suggestions and feedback on the process and show how that feedback is used
* Ask for input when planning the meeting agenda
* During interviews to gather information and team meetings, minimize disruptions so that you can remain focused and attentive on the conversation
* Provide opportunities for the student to lead meeting discussions
* Reflect the value that the student is a partner in arriving at strategies and supports for their child (“Together we can arrive at the right combination of supports for Micah”).
* Ask for the student’s input when deciding on interventions and strategies

**Examples of Strategies to Reflect on and Be Responsive to Gender, Cultural, & Historical Issues**

* Recognize and reflect on how the intersection of various experiences and variables has led to this point.
* Engage in practices to reflect on biases and stereotypes and how those biases maybe negatively influencing the process.
* Stay alert to and recognize when bias is present and influencing the process.
* Routinely implement practices to neutralize the occurrence of bias across all phases of the process.
* Reflect on decisions and practices from the parent’s/student’s point of view.
* Obtain local input or advice to guide the process implementation and the phrasing of sensitive questions/discussions
* Have materials translated into the parent’s / student’s primary language or language of preference and have an interpreter available. Ensure that translators receive a copy of the questions ahead of the interview to review and prepare for translation.
* Provide the parent / student with options for who can facilitate the interview.
* Include questions that solicit information about traditions, routines or rituals that are important to the family.
* Use equity reflections through the decision-making process, such as:
  + Who benefits from this decision?
  + In what ways is the student at risk of not benefiting from this decision?
  + What is/are potential unanticipated consequences of this decision?
  + How has the student and parent/caregiver voice influenced decision making to ensure that decisions are culturally responsive and reflective of student/parent priorities?
  + Do the decisions authentically reflect the student and parent/caregiver priorities?