

# Communicating about Your Trauma-Informed, Resilience-Oriented School Initiative

Early communication about the purposes and goals of a trauma-informed resilience-oriented innovation in your school can go a long way in generating buy-in, collaboration, and support from students, staff, and community members. The three communication tools created in these activities will assist the team in communicating what they have learned and hope to accomplish to everyone who is connected to the school and/or district.

Complete these activities as a team and then share them with consistency with all school stakeholders including teachers and staff, parents and families, community members, board members, and students.

## Communication Activity #1: Visioning

### Prerequisite Activity

Members of the team are ready to participate in visioning when they have completed professional development on the foundational principles of trauma-informed, resilience-oriented schools, how this approach can support improved outcomes, and the team's urgency to act.

### Time Needed

60 minutes

### Materials

District's and school's current vision

### Steps

1. Individually, team members brainstorm words that represent the essence of a trauma-informed, resilience-oriented school. Write these down on a sheet of paper.
2. In a small group, team members use the words they have brainstormed and along with the district/school's current vision develop a draft trauma-informed, resilience-oriented vision for their school. The guiding question for this step is: "What will our trauma-informed resilience-oriented school community look like in five years?"
3. Bring the full team together. Discuss the similarities and differences between each small group's draft visions. Determine how they can be combined into their final draft of a trauma-informed, resilience-oriented vision for your school.

In the beginning of your initiative, use this vision to share with the stakeholders what your team is hoping to accomplish. As the transformation begins to take hold in the school or district, the trauma-informed, resilience-oriented vision can be proposed as an update on the current district or school vision.



### **Sample visions:<sup>1</sup>**

- “We strive to create a safe, supportive, restorative culture by becoming unified, patient and compassionate to all.” -Meadows Lake Core Implementation Team & The Excel Center-Goodwill, 2019
- “Empowering students through relationships, resiliency and hope.” -Matanuska-Susitna Burrough School District, 2017

## **Communication Activity #2: Elevator Speech**

### **Prerequisite Activity**

Complete Visioning Activity

### **Time Needed**

30 minutes

### **Materials:**

- Draft vision
- Trauma Its Impact on Learning and the Structure of our Response Professional Development Training Slide Deck
- Group’s statement on urgency

Once the team has created its vision, they will determine how to communicate it to stakeholders. The team can create an elevator speech about the initiative and the vision using this activity. The speech should be creative, catchy, and short enough to be delivered in a 5-minute elevator ride while still incorporating the essence of the vision.

Here are some tips for an elevator speech:<sup>2</sup>

1. The elements of a good elevator speech Include an impact story, a catchy piece of data and the key elements of the vision.
2. The ultimate goal of the elevator speech is to create support and buy-in for your innovation and the work to come.
3. Every team’s elevator speech is unique, written for the cultural context and the needs of your school and district.
4. Begin the speech with a catchy story or piece of data.
5. End the speech with information about how and when they will be able to learn more.

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1 Cook, E. and Black, P. (2012). Chapter 21, Effective Implementation and Evaluation of Trauma-Informed Schools. Supporting and Educating Traumatized Students. Ed. by Rossen, E and Hull, R. Oxford University Press. 373-395.

2 Lininger, Nicole (2020, January 27). 5 Do’s and Don’ts for Your Elevator Pitch. The Balance Small Business <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/elevator-pitch-tips-2951716>.

## Communication Activity #3: Communicating for Buy-In

### Prerequisite Activity

Visioning Activity and Elevator Speech

### Time Needed

45 minutes

### Materials Needed

- List of various stakeholders for the school or district,
- Vision and elevator speech
- Trauma Its Impact on Learning and the Structure of our Response Professional Development Training Slide Deck

### Steps:

1. Break into groups of 3-5.
2. Assign a different stakeholder to each group. They will create a tailored elevator speech to give to groups within their stakeholder circle. Instruct the groups to start by reviewing the vision and the general elevator speech your group already prepared. Then, as a group, address the prompting questions below.
  - Who is your audience?
  - What are trauma-informed, resilience-oriented approaches and why are they important to you?
  - Why are trauma-informed, resilience-oriented approaches important to your school and district?
  - Why are trauma-informed, resilience-oriented approaches important to your audience? What is the audience's problem that you are attempting to solve?
  - Is there any language that you should avoid? What will turn the audience off?
3. Outline three key points to convey in the speech and then draft it.
4. After 15 minutes, bring the full group together.
5. One by one, each group presents their elevator speech to the large group as though they were the stakeholder. The large group should ask questions and comment to help the group strengthen their presentation.