

**UCSF HEARTS Core Guiding Principles for Creating Trauma-Informed Schools**  
(modified from San Francisco Department of Public Health Trauma-Informed Systems Initiative)

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Trauma-Informed Lens Rationale</b>	<b>Description of Principle</b>
Understand trauma and stress	Without understanding trauma, we are more likely to misinterpret trauma-related behaviors as willful, “sick,” or “crazy,” which can lead to ineffective, stigmatizing and/or punitive reactions to trauma-impacted people.	Understanding how trauma and stress can affect individuals, relationships, organizations, health, and work can help to reframe otherwise confusing or aggravating behavior. This can in turn assist us to recognize trauma’s effects more accurately, which can then lead to more compassionate, strength-based, and effective responses to trauma-impacted people that promote healing, instead of reactions that inadvertently re-traumatize and cause harm.
Establish safety and predictability	Trauma unpredictably violates our physical, social, and emotional safety, resulting in a sense of threat and a need to focus resources on managing risks.	Establishing physical, social, and emotional safety, as well as predictability in the environment, can assist us to focus resources on healthy development, wellness, learning, and teaching.
Foster compassionate and dependable relationships	Trauma can leave us feeling isolated or betrayed, which may make it difficult to trust others and receive support.	By fostering relationships that are compassionate and attuned, as well as dependable and trustworthy, we reestablish trusting connections with others that foster healing and well-being.
Promote resilience and social emotional learning	Trauma can derail the development of healthy skills in regulating emotions, cognitions, and behaviors, as well as healthy interpersonal skills, which can then compound trauma’s negative effects.	Promoting wellness practices and building social emotional learning competencies of self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2012) can help us to be resilient and more successful in achieving our goals in school and at work, and to develop to our fullest potential.
Practice cultural humility and responsiveness	We come from diverse cultural groups that may experience different traumas and stressors, react to these adversities differently, and experience differences in how others respond to our traumatic experiences.	When we are open to understanding the root causes of these differences and respond to them sensitively and with cultural humility, we make each other feel understood and equity is enhanced.
Facilitate empowerment and collaboration	Trauma involves a loss of power and control that can make us feel helpless and hopeless.	When we are given meaningful opportunities to have voice and choice and our strengths are acknowledged and built upon, we feel empowered to advance growth and well-being for ourselves and others, and we can work together to forward the cause of social justice.