

## Handout: Three types of trauma

Description	Examples	Impacts	Ways trauma sensitive schools can support students
<i>Acute trauma</i>			
<p>Acute traumatic events have identified onsets and clear endpoints, although impacts can extend into the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural disasters</li> <li>Human-created disasters</li> <li>Accidents that result in temporary injuries</li> <li>Stress associated with COVID-19</li> </ul>	<p>Immediate behavioral disruptions following the trauma such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety</li> <li>Sleep disturbance</li> <li>Regressive behaviors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behaviors can sometimes decline without intervention.</li> <li>A true trauma-sensitive environment will support positive behavior in these students and will not take a punitive stance toward students.</li> <li>Schools can become safe havens for students following an acute stressor.</li> </ul>
<i>Complex trauma</i>			
<p>Complex traumatic events involve repeated patterns of trauma that occur over the course of childhood or that may be confined to an extended developmental period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical/emotional /sexual abuse</li> <li>Poverty, food insecurity, and/or homelessness</li> <li>Parental substance-use disorder</li> </ul>	<p>Long-term difficulties with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trust and relationships</li> <li>Impaired physical health</li> <li>Emotional and behavioral regulation</li> <li>Cognition and attention</li> </ul> <p>Experiences of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing shame or guilt</li> <li>Changes to self-perception</li> <li>Changes in perspectives and beliefs about the world</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School staff can be people in a student's life who appreciate them for who they are and consistently support them.</li> <li>Other resilience factors include health-care access, social acceptance by peers, and having one's uniqueness appreciated rather than simply tolerated.</li> </ul>

Description	Examples	Impacts	Ways trauma sensitive schools can support students
<i>Historical/Intergenerational trauma</i>			
<p>Historical/intergenerational trauma is the passing on of one generation’s collective traumatic experience to future generations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil unrest/armed conflict</li> <li>• Collective oppression and abuse of specific ethnic/cultural groups (such as slavery, genocide, discrimination)</li> </ul>	<p>Long-term impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family and community conflict and mistrust</li> <li>• Ambivalence about mainstream traditional values</li> <li>• Mistrust of mainstream systems</li> <li>• Socioeconomic disadvantages</li> <li>• Mental and physical health difficulties</li> <li>• Premature mortality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trauma-sensitive schools recognize and help meet the needs of students who are impacted by historical/intergenerational trauma by implementing culturally responsive and inclusive policies and practices.</li> </ul>

References:

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Pumariega, A. J., Jo, Y., Beck, B., & Rahmani, M. (2022). Trauma and US minority children and youth. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, 24(4), 285-295.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (n. d.). Trauma types. <https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types>.