

Untreated Trauma Can Have Long-Term Impact on Youth

Trauma is a distressing event or set of experiences that can have immediate and long-term impact on a child's mental and physical health. Trauma is common in children and can result from abuse or neglect, community or family violence, stressors of poverty, and bullying.

Up to 18% of children in California and 25% of children in Oakland¹ have experienced two or more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), a way of measuring traumatic events. Long-term exposure to trauma can develop into what is known as "toxic stress," the extreme or frequent activation of the body's stress response. This form of trauma can have major impacts on physical, social, and emotional well-being. Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable, as toxic stress can cause fundamental changes to brain structure and can dramatically alter the ability to learn and interact with others.

Making Schools and Classrooms Trauma-Informed

At the California School-Based Health Alliance (CSHA), we are working to identify best practices for trauma-informed, healing-centered, and resilience-focused work in schools and school-based health centers in California. For many years, CSHA has worked with schools in West Contra Costa and Alameda counties to identify and test strategies for supporting young people who are impacted by trauma so that they can heal and learn. CSHA is working with Oakland Unified School District to support 13 school-based health centers serving ten Oakland middle schools to increase trauma screenings and interventions, improve school culture and climate, and identify strategies to maximize billing and funding opportunities to continue this work for students. One of the schools in this program is Frick Impact Academy in East Oakland, which is working to shift its culture and climate through wellness programming.

25% of children in Oakland have experienced two or more adverse childhood experiences

¹Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health. Adverse Childhood Experiences Among Oakland and California Youth (factsheet). Accessed from www.acesconnection.org.



Frick Impact Academy 2018 School Dashboard



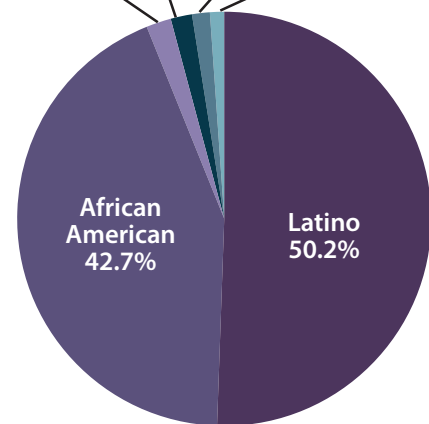
227
 students enrolled



93%
 eligible for free & reduced price meals

Demographics - Race/Ethnicity

Pacific Islander 1.8% Filipino 1.3%
 Mixed 1.8% White 0.9%



Trauma-Informed School Spotlight: Practices for Mindful Students and Staff

At Frick Impact Academy, the SBHC and school have collectively made a commitment to trauma-informed practices. The SBHC is run by lead agency East Bay Agency for Children (EBAC) and medical and dental provider Native American Health Center (NAHC). For years, EBAC has been working with school staff, NAHC and the Oakland Unified School District to build school-based health services for their student body.

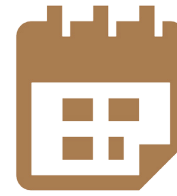
Three years ago, EBAC hired Lance McGee as a Wellness Consultant to be part of their health center team. Mr. McGee is trained as a Marriage and Family Therapist and is employed part-time at Frick.

With the support of EBAC Program Director, Mr. McGee is tasked with weaving mindfulness into the Frick culture and the day-to-day experience of students and teachers. This is an ongoing process with more work still to be done, but EBAC and Frick are happy with the progress so far. Since they began, there has been a noticeable shift in school culture that anyone walking through the doors can feel.

Key program elements include:

- **Morning meditation:** Mornings at Frick start with a meditation and reminder for students and staff to set a specific intention for the day. Each day is assigned a theme to encourage students to practice mindfulness. For example, Wellness Wednesdays promote taking care of yourself and others around you and on Forgiveness Fridays, Mr. McGee guides students and staff through a mindful moment to encourage them to forgive themselves or others to achieve and create peace.
- **Classroom space:** Most classrooms have a Peace Corner, which is a space for students to go when they notice they are starting to feel activated. The spaces are often equipped with toys or activities to help them reset and refresh before joining the class again.
- **Teacher training:** Teachers at Frick are trained in trauma-informed practices at the beginning of the school year, with refresher trainings scheduled throughout the year and as needed or requested. As a result, teachers offer a variety of mindfulness activities to their students and create their own mindfulness practice to help reduce stress and burnout.
- **Teacher support and coaching:** Currently 25 teachers, including the school principal, participate in regular check-in meetings with Mr. McGee. During these sessions, Mr. McGee offers a safe space for teachers to process their own vicarious trauma and practice healthy coping skills.
- **Teacher space:** Mr. McGee converted a former gym office into a wellness retreat space for school staff. This space is available before, during and after the school day for staff to take a break and refresh. On offer are soothing music, lavender oils, tea, smoothies, healthy snacks, meditation tools and a quiet, comfortable place to decompress and re-gain their energy.

Daily Themes at Frick Impact Academy



Mindful Monday
Tune-in Tuesday
Wellness Wednesday
Thankful Thursday
Forgiveness Friday

Making a Cozy Peace Corner



Squishy "stress" ball
Glitter jar
Emotional feelings sheet
Blank paper, pens, and crayons
Sand timer
Soft, small blanket



School Staff Wellness Space at Frick Impact Academy

The Impact of Making Frick A Healing and Resilient School

Frick staff are seeing the benefits of these interventions, and the power of the support that Mr. McGee offers. Many of the teachers at Frick this year were new, first-year teachers, and both teachers and administrators believe the program has helped support teacher retention. By increasing staff skills in trauma-informed de-escalation, Frick has been able to lower its student suspension rates by 40%.

Recommendations and Resources for Your School Community

Preparation:

- Conduct a school-wide assessment of trauma-informed and restorative practices. CSHA can provide examples of school-wide assessment tools to measure and strengthen your school's current policies and practices.
- Engage your school administrative team to ensure they are invested in this work. They may have ideas on who can lead or how to get this work started.
- Leverage current community partnerships to find stakeholders who are committed to wellness supports at your school. Recruit them for help identifying the needs of students, finding funding, and offering services.
- Identify training resources for staff. The East Bay Agency for Children hosts a resource portal through its [Trauma Transformed Project](#) and CSHA has both [School Climate Resources](#) and [Mental Health Resources](#).

Getting started:

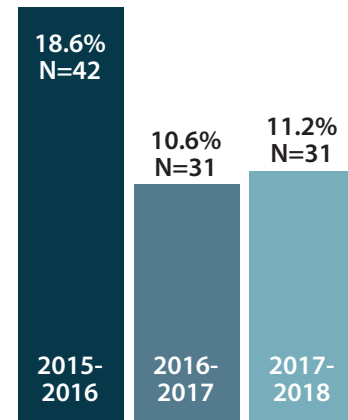
- Build authentic relationships between school administrators and health/mental health providers. Questions to explore: What are the hopes for this work? What is the capacity and desire to support wellness and mindfulness on our campus? How can we work together to make this a success?
- Ideally secure at least a small amount of funding before the work begins, so that school staff and administrators can have some carved out time for this work. Community benefit grants, LCAP/LCFF funding, school Medi-Cal dollars, and county Mental Health Services Act funding are all possible sources. CSHA's [Public Funding for School-Based Mental Health Programs](#) and [Kaiser's Thriving Schools](#) program are both resources.
- Identify the evaluation data points that you want to track over time. Consider alignment with LCAP: you might track school suspension rates, staff comfort with de-escalation and/or restorative practices, student perception of school safety, and/or student connectivity with staff.

Sustaining the work:

- Get on the professional development calendar for your school staff. Offer a training before school begins and consistent refresher trainings throughout the year.
- Carve out specific healing and wellness spaces. Many schools repurpose the 'teacher's lounge' to be more wellness focused.
- If you do not have funding to support a specific position, train on-going Wellness Champions that have interest and capacity to continue the work through a train-the-trainer model.
- A note for funders: This type of work requires long-term investment and flexible funding so that sites are able to focus on long-term impact and be responsive to the specific needs of their school community.

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Frick Impact Academy School Suspension Rates



Frick Impact Academy Staff Survey

"I know how to de-escalate a student using a trauma-informed approach"

