

The tragic event at Oxford High School last week left all of us shaken and deeply saddened by the young lives lost and the trauma perpetrated on the school community. Violence has no place in our schools and, yet, events like the one in Oxford, Michigan seem to occur with increasing regularity. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the students and families who have been impacted by last Tuesday's mass shooting and we stand in solidarity with those who call for swift and decisive legislative action to end firearm violence, one of the leading causes of serious injury and death among young people, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). We also support calls to increase the availability of mental health resources for children, adolescents, and families. At the same time, we remain steadfast in our commitment to making schools more inclusive and to helping students impacted by trauma begin to heal. Building strong school communities and relationships is key to reducing violence and to protecting young people from the immediate and long-term consequences of trauma.

In the broadest sense, trauma-informed schools are those that provide children with the care, support, and resources they need to recover and work to their potential. Trauma-informed schools seek to increase awareness of trauma exposure and trauma symptoms, build supportive school and classroom communities, teach children social-emotional skills, and counteract biases and harsh disciplinary practices that can re-traumatize and cause further harm to some students. When schools are trauma-informed, they are organized to help children understand and effectively cope with the effects of adversity. There is no one pathway for schools to become trauma-informed, but there are principles and strategies that schools can use to transform environments so that they are safe, nurturing, and inclusive.

In our collective grief, frustration, and anger, let us commit ourselves fully to ending violence and to taking bold action to make our schools trauma-informed. Further, to help students cope with the aftermath of this traumatic event, we would like to share a guide with teachers and other school personnel regarding [Returning to School Following a Crisis](#). This guide was developed by our University of Michigan partners at the National Center for School Safety.