



HEALING - CENTERED  
SCHOOLS WORKING GROUP



# NEW YORK CITY NEEDS HEALING-CENTERED SCHOOLS NOW!

## WHAT ARE HEALING CENTER SCHOOLS AND WHY DO WE NEED THEM?



Nationwide, more than **1 in 4 students** have been exposed to some form of trauma, with students of color and students living in poverty disproportionately impacted. Over the last two years, students have experienced untold trauma related to Covid-19, systemic racism, school shootings and war. Research tells us that trauma inhibits a student's ability to learn, to develop self-regulation skills, and to form healthy relationships.

To address these issues, Bronx Legal Services and New Settlement Parent Action Committee convened a group of concerned parents, students, educators, mental health providers, and advocates from the Bronx in 2018 to form **The Healing-Centered Schools Working Group** in 2018 to push NYC Schools to adopt a healing-centered framework for education. **A healing-centered school is one that takes affirmative steps to ensure that all students, staff, and parents/caregivers feel safe, supported, and seen** — a necessary ingredient for learning and for a strong school community. When our students are given the space to heal, to learn, and to exist in community with one another, they are able to grow their strengths and build a foundation for success.

## HOW TRAUMA IMPACTS THE BRAIN

Research shows that trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) **impacts brain development**

The parts of the brain most impacted are the areas associated with **learning, emotional reactions and paying attention**

However, the brain can heal from the exposures to trauma and ACEs. Schools can help students heal by adopting practices and policies that **focus on providing an emotionally safe and supportive environment**

# HOW ARE WE ADVOCATING FOR HEALING-CENTERED APPROACHES?

The Healing-Centered Working Group is bringing community together in exciting ways to advocate for NYC Schools to implement lasting structures that support staff wellness, parent involvement, and student growth and healing, including by:



**Uniting students, educators, parents, community groups, mental health providers, elected officials, and NYC Department of Education leadership** to study how the City can implement healing-centered educational practices



**Continuously advocating and supporting healing-centered and restorative practices in our schools** (e.g. hosting support sessions and organizational meetings; providing parent training, and giving healing-centered schools presentations city-wide)



**Uplifting efforts to remove structures of harm in the school community** like the use of zero-tolerance and exclusionary disciplinary practices, and the policing of students and families through child protective services



**Issuing a roadmap** ([bit.ly/RoadmapToHealing](https://bit.ly/RoadmapToHealing)) and recommendations to NYC Schools outlining steps they can take to implement healing centered education. Supporting NYC DOE's School's "Healing Ambassadors Program" by providing support to hundreds of Healing Ambassadors, District "SEL" Ambassadors, and 21 pilot Healing Centered Schools



**The Family Healing Ambassadors Program continues to lead parent-led workshops** to help students and parents cope with trauma and feel seen, heard, supported and collectively heal," including "Transition from Trauma to Triumph," "When we Heal Together, We feel Together," "Self Care and Coping during a Pandemic," and "Walk with me Wednesdays." Learn more about the Ambassador Program [here](#).



**Supporting the initiation of Healing-Centered projects** at a group of schools that are part of a pilot program, including gardening, health fairs, healing rooms, workshops for staff and families

## HOW DO YOU GET INVOLVED?

The Working Group is looking for people to join the creation of healing-centered schools:

- We need the Healing Ambassador and Pilot School programs to continue and grow
- We need parents, students, community members, school staff and elected officials to participate in listening sessions and collaborate in implementing healing centered practices
- We also need parents, students, community members, school staff and elected officials to participate in the work of the Healing Centered Schools Working Group

If you are interested in participating in or supporting these initiatives, please email [bxhealingcenteredschools@gmail.com](mailto:bxhealingcenteredschools@gmail.com).

THE HEALING-CENTERED SCHOOLS WORKING GROUP is a coalition of parents, students, advocates, educators, and mental health providers working to bring healing-centered practices to all Bronx schools.

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