The Bronx Healing-Centered Schools Working Group have long witnessed the impact of systemic and interpersonal trauma on our communities and our students’ ability to learn, and we have seen how our students suffer when schools neglect or punish trauma-related behavior. Bronx students are exposed to food and housing insecurity, individual and community violence, over-policing, and persistent racism and discrimination. On top of that, when they go to school, many of our students experience re-traumatization or novel trauma caused by punitive responses to behavior, racial trauma or other forms of discrimination, and staff responses that minimize or neglect students’ needs. These compounded traumatic experiences impact brain functioning, development, self-regulation skills, the ability to form healthy relationships, and students’ ability to learn. In the long term, these experiences can also influence students’ educational outcomes, employment stability, physical health, and criminal justice involvement.

SOLUTION: HEALING-CENTERED SCHOOLS

The Working Group believes that schools can become sites of healing and growth. This Roadmap lays out a step-by-step process to help schools remove structures that undermine healing, build practices that advance healing, and create whole-school change in the process. It is a culmination of two years of intense research, community conversations, and drafting by the members of the Working Group spearheaded by Katrina Feldkamp, an Equal Justice Works Fellow at Bronx Legal Services. The Working Group hopes this document will provide students, parents/caregivers, community leaders, and concerned school staff the necessary framework to bring healing-centered practices to schools in the Bronx and citywide.

Read the Roadmap here. Read the Press Release here. Watch the virtual Town Hall event here.

ABOUT THE WORKING GROUP:

In 2018, members of the Bronx Borough Based Council of the Coordinated Children’s Services Initiative formed the Working Group which includes advocates, educators, parents/caregivers, students, mental health providers and social service agencies. The group’s mission is to help all Bronx schools build healing-centered practices that will support students’ behavioral health needs and reduce school officials’ reliance on the use of punitive, exclusionary discipline practices and, worse, the use of School Safety Agents, 911, and emergency medical services.

The Working Group wishes to thank the following individuals and organizations that have signed on to support the Roadmap’s proposals and values. If you or your organization would like to sign on to the Roadmap, please fill out this form.

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