



## International Journal of School Social Work

### CALL FOR PAPERS: SPECIAL ISSUE

#### Applying a Social Justice Lens to Trauma-Informed Approaches in Education

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Global Perspectives on Trauma-Informed Approaches in Education</b>
<b>Date of Issue:</b>	TBD (Target date of early to mid-2021)
<b>Guest Editors:</b>	Gary Walsh, University of Glasgow School of Education & Michael Kelly, Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work
<b>Deadline:</b>	March 15th for abstract submissions to <a href="mailto:mkell17@luc.edu">mkell17@luc.edu</a>

Trauma-informed approaches to childhood care and education have become increasingly widespread. The popularization of the ‘ACEs’ model (Adverse Childhood Experiences) has contributed significantly to this process and has led to the adoption of trauma-informed approaches in education (Vericat Rocha & Ruitenberg, 2019). However, despite the growing adoption of such approaches, there is a significant lack of evidence in relation to the efficacy of trauma-informed initiatives in schools, particularly at the level of school-wide trauma-informed approaches (Maynard et al., 2019). The original ‘ACEs study’ (Felitti et al., 1998) focused on emotional, physical and sexual abuse; neglect; and dysfunction in households such as domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness, divorce and parental imprisonment. These experiences were found to be pervasive and the long-term effects of cumulative ACEs were found to be especially serious, with an ‘ACE score’ of four or more significantly increasing the risk of substance abuse, mental health issues, suicide and health conditions including heart/liver/lung disease and cancer (ibid.). The study is considered a landmark in epidemiological research, enabling a notable increase in public and political attention to the dangers and long-term effects of early childhood trauma (Vericat Rocha & Ruitenberg, 2019).

The ACEs study and the resulting shift towards trauma-informed approaches has been criticized for failing to recognize or address the social, economic and structural causes of trauma such as poverty, housing, racism, environmental pollutants and neighborhood violence (McEwen and Gregerson, 2018). Indeed, some scholars, activists, and critics have argued that schools themselves can and do traumatize youth further and possibly even cause more harm in the name of being trauma-informed (Kelly, 2019). White et al. (2019) argue that ACEs is a deficit model that locates social problems within children and families, describing it as a ‘chaotic concept for family policy and decision making’ with significant limitations in the body of evidence and the measures used. These sociological critiques are especially relevant as deprivation has been shown to increase the risk of

adversity in childhood (Lewer et al., 2019), and socio-economic measures to improve housing, income, transport and other ‘upstream interventions’ have been shown to reduce exposure to ACEs (Courtin et al., 2019; Blair et al., 2019).

This leads to questions about the role of trauma-informed practices in education and how these issues are best conceptualized. Education practitioners are increasingly required to deal with the effects of childhood trauma and stress. There is an urgent need to clarify how practitioners should come to understand and respond to these complex problems, and specifically how trauma-informed approaches can be developed alongside and as an integral part of efforts to achieve economic, social, environmental and racial justice. A crucial question to ask is whether the implementation of trauma-informed approaches is burdening education with a responsibility it cannot discharge, given the wider structural causes of trauma that are beyond the control of schools and indeed the families they serve, along with the very real possibility that schools are creating conditions that might be themselves traumatizing, especially for minority youth when trauma-informed approaches are implemented without attention to structural racism and equity frameworks (Gorski & Swalwell, 2015).

The purpose of this special issue, therefore, is to apply a social justice lens to the question of how education practitioners (including but not limited to teachers, school mental health practitioners, school social workers and school resource/security officers) operating within primary and secondary school contexts around the world, are thinking about trauma-informed education and care, what they are doing to address these issues in their schools, and to consider the broader implications of a global shift towards trauma-informed approaches in education. We are particularly interested in utilizing the papers in this special issue to deepen and expand our understanding of what trauma-informed education and care looks like in diverse cultural, geographic, and national contexts, and anticipate that a successful special issue will surface new ways of thinking about these issues outside of the conventional notions often espoused in our home countries (the UK and USA).

Specific topics will be explored in this issue, including:

- 1) Testing and developing a rigorous and coherent definition of trauma-informed approaches using a social justice lens that can be applied to global educational contexts.
- 2) Assessing the potential for trauma-informed approaches in diverse global school contexts.
- 3) Analyzing the empirical evidence for trauma-informed approaches in schools via a myriad of methodologies (clinical trials, qualitative studies, case studies, among others).
- 4) Evaluating the potential negative or at least unintended impacts of trauma-informed policies and programs in education and other sectors affecting youth.

This special issue of *The International Journal of School Social Work* will explore these issues, and submissions in the following areas are particularly requested:

- I. **Conceptual Articles** providing definitional clarity and theoretical frameworks supporting the integration of trauma-informed education and care using a social justice lens.
- II. **Empirical Articles** that apply trauma-informed approaches to school social work and school mental health practice, including articles addressing trauma-informed interventions, whole-school approaches, and other related policies, possibly including:

- Direct practice with individuals or families
- Group work (treatment or classroom group)
- Organizational practice
- School-Community Practice
- Policy practice
- Practice in rural or urban settings
- Practice with specific youth populations

III. Articles focused on **research methods** informed by or grounded in concepts of trauma-informed approaches using a social justice lens.

IV. Articles focused on the integration of trauma-informed approaches into pre- and post-service training and policy.

V. **Practice Wisdom** (narrative articles written by school social workers about what they are doing that works in their setting),

VI. **Student Perspectives** (articles submitted by social work students describing their experiences as school social workers and education professionals in both international and U.S. school contexts).

**Guidelines for submitting abstracts:**

All authors are strongly encouraged to contact the special edition editors by email or Twitter (see contact information below) on or before March 15<sup>th</sup> to discuss ideas for paper submissions. The deadline **for all abstract submissions is March 15<sup>th</sup>**, and we will endeavour to contact authors quickly with feedback and to let them know if we’re inviting them to submit a full article for review. We hope to have a final issue to publish in early 2021.

Abstracts submitted to this IJSSW special issue CFP should begin with a title page, including the author’s name, address, phone number, email address, abstract of no more than 500 words, and a list of key words. Please use the American Psychological Association Style Manual format (6<sup>th</sup> edition) for in-text references and reference lists. Abstracts should be submitted electronically as email attachments, preferably in Microsoft Word.

Completed abstracts must be **sent by March 15<sup>th</sup>** to Michael S. Kelly and Gary Walsh, special issue co-editors, at the address/email addresses listed below.

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