

8 KEY ELEMENTS TO BUILDING AND SUSTAINING A TRAUMA-INFORMED COMMUNITY NETWORK



Greater Richmond (VA) TICN Coordinators
Greater Richmond SCAN (Stop Child Abuse Now)



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BACKGROUND

The Greater Richmond Trauma-Informed Community Network (GRTICN) of Virginia is a multi-sector community collaborative convened by Greater Richmond SCAN (Stop Child Abuse Now), that shares a commitment towards the creation of a more trauma-informed and resilient community within the Greater Richmond region. The GRTICN works towards preventing and mitigating the impact of adverse childhood experiences and building individual and community resilience.

The Greater Richmond TICN was inspired in the spring of 2012 by work and publications around the United States about trauma-informed care and trauma-informed practices. Namely, the work of Dr. Bruce Perry, Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, Dr. Rick Gaskill, The Chadwick Center, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAHMSA) and Brian Samuels, the Commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families. The Executive Director of Greater Richmond SCAN (GRSCAN), Jeanine Harper, believed that this national work could inform local efforts and knew from practice experience at GRSCAN that improvement was needed within many of our local systems. Ms. Harper convened a group of seven professionals to begin a conversation about what could be done to improve trauma-informed care in the Richmond, Virginia area.

Although attendees of these early meetings varied in their initial responses, with some feeling unsure that already overwhelmed systems could take on a new initiative, everyone agreed that a movement towards improvement of practice in child and family serving agencies in the Richmond, Virginia area was needed. Over the years, this small group of professionals quickly grew into a multi-sector community collaborative known as the Greater Richmond Trauma Informed Community Network (GRTICN). The GRTICN is comprised of over 500 members from more than 175 different organizations representing a wide range of systems that include public, private, non-profit, state, and local government agencies.

As awareness grew of the work happening within the GRTICN, many asked for guidance and consultation on developing a community network within their region. We identified eight key elements that led to our collaborative success and sustainability. We have outlined each of these elements along with helpful tips in the pages that follow. As of this publication, 26 TICNs in Virginia have developed based on the initial work and guidance of the GRTICN. Each network is unique and many are referenced within this document. We recognize that every community is different – with different needs, challenges and strengths. These 8 key elements are meant to serve as categories to consider in network development and to be adapted to each community.

8 Key Elements for Building a Trauma-Informed Community Network



Backbone Organization
& Strong Leadership



Multi-Sector/Multi-
System Collaboration



Inclusive & Equitable
Membership



Identification of
Community
Strengths & Needs



Common Agenda &
Vision Statement



Structure for Reaching
Objectives/Goals



Ongoing
Communication &
Engagement



System for Measuring
Outcomes

KEY ELEMENT 1



Backbone Organization & Strong Leadership

One of the first steps in network development is to identify a local agency/organization to serve as the backbone organization. This agency/organization will take the lead on coordinating efforts and providing administrative support to the network.

- Identify individuals within the backbone organization to provide leadership, management and coordination of the network efforts.
- Examples of backbone organizations in Virginia: Non-profit agencies (Greater Richmond SCAN, Haven Shelter, Piedmont CASA); Community based organizations (United Way); Local county/city agencies (James City County Department of Social Services).
- See GRTICN Coordinator Responsibilities document for an example of potential responsibilities in Appendix A.

TIPS



- * Leadership style should exemplify trauma-informed practice by displaying empathy, understanding and respect to all network members.
- * Leadership needs to provide a safe, stable and grounding presence and lead when necessary. Leaders need to remember to consult with experts when needed and invite them to share areas of expertise with network members.
- * Recognize that within a trauma-informed network many individuals and systems may be overwhelmed and highly stressed. They may be impacted by their own personal, systemic and/or historical trauma.
- * Be resourceful. Use space donated by community partners or other free meeting space such as libraries, faith based spaces, community centers, county/city training centers and administrative offices. Community partners may be able to donate meeting materials, provide refreshments and/or administrative support.

KEY ELEMENT 2



Multi-Sector/Multi-System Collaboration

A *multi-sector/multi-system collaboration* is the partnership that results when government, non-profit, private and public organizations, community groups and individual community members come together to create a more trauma informed and resilient community.

- Purpose is to maximize resources, encourage networking and information sharing, and allow for improved communication.
- Creates a network that moves people out of silos and encourages collaboration and participation across systems.
- Examples of multi-sector partners: Faith community, Schools, Healthcare, Child Welfare, Community Members, First Responders, City/County Government, Military, Youth Organizations, Mental Health, Senior Organizations, Business/Philanthropy, Environment. (For additional ideas, please reference [FACT Framework](#).)

TIPS

- * Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) impact everyone – across all systems and across the lifespan – in different ways.
- * Start with existing relationships and invite others from different sectors.
- * Utilize existing partnerships

KEY ELEMENT 3



Inclusive & Equitable Membership

Inclusive and equitable membership allows **all people** to belong to the network. The diversity within every community needs to be considered when welcoming members to the network.

- Recognize the impact of historical, generational and racial trauma, and be mindful of these experiences that network members may be carrying.
- Recognize how issues of race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, ability and economics may impact an individual's ability to connect and engage with the network.
- Conduct ongoing evaluation of network membership to identify areas for outreach and work toward equitable representation (e.g., reference community data).
- Be intentional in inviting members from all sectors and allowing participation to vary based on each member's needs and choice (e.g., some members may not be able to or want to attend an in-person meeting and are connected in other ways; some may choose to belong to a short term work group or may only want access to electronic communication).
- Ensure all voices are heard in the process. Provide different options for sharing input (e.g., anonymous surveys, focus groups, open agenda for meetings where all can add agenda items, providing information during committee and/or network meetings, etc.).
- Reduce barriers for members to access meetings and resources (e.g., have flexibility around meeting times and locations to increase accessibility).
- Disseminate information using a variety of methods (e.g., languages spoken in the community, sharing information by e-mail, social media, flyers, public TV/radio, etc.).

TIPS

- * Create a network that is inviting and safe for everyone (e.g., front line workers, supervisors, directors, consumers, caregivers, youth, persons with lived experience).
- * Apply an equity and inclusion lens to all of the work within the network
- * Use targeted recruitment to include: word of mouth, training and special events (e.g., *Resilience* documentary screenings, Intro to Trauma & Resilience Trainings, flyers, media, special events table). See GRTICN Informational Card as an example in Appendix B.

KEY ELEMENT 4



Identification of Community Strengths & Needs

- Identify existing local initiatives, committees and coalitions that are occurring in the community that may overlap with the network's mission, objectives, goals, vision, etc, to coordinate efforts.
- Identify the immediate gaps, needs, and priorities within the community and determine where to begin. These needs may be within certain systems such as schools, juvenile justice, child welfare, healthcare, etc.
- Conduct a scan of current state/national initiatives and lessons learned from communities who have already begun to do this work in order to learn from their experiences and utilize existing resources.



TIPS

- * Collect local and state research to gather baseline data for the community (e.g., Voices for Virginia's Children Kid's Count, local and state Health Department data, Child Welfare system data, community assessment information, gun violence data, suicide data, etc.).
- * Assess needs within the workforce (e.g., trauma exposure responses, knowledge of trauma-informed practice).
- * Reference ACEs Connection to learn more about initiatives and to connect with others.
- * Continue to assess community needs to prioritize the focus of the network's efforts.



- ## examples

Growth & Innovation: We strive to identify and remain adaptive to the needs of the community.

STICN exists to create a community of wholeness and to recreate the norm from trauma to resilience by building awareness, knowledge and engagement of trauma recovery. As individuals and organizations, we set free limiting mindsets that have led to practices, policies, and institutions that write off children, youth, adults or families. Rather, we embrace change-thinking that instills a sense of hope and dispels hopelessness.

TIPS

- * Review examples from other networks:
 - Fairfax TICN
 - Greater Richmond TICN
 - Roanoke Valley TICN
 - MARC Communities
 - ACEs Connection Communities



KEY ELEMENT 6



Structure for Reaching Objectives/Goals

- Convene larger meetings to spread awareness, engage in multi-sector collaboration and share information (committee updates, resources). Disseminate meeting minutes for all large network meetings and provide access to resources that were shared.
- Develop a structure to carry out the work, such as committees/workgroups to have more focused discussion on a designated topic/issue.
- Identify leader(s) for each committee/workgroup based on interest and expertise.
- Schedule regular meetings with leaders of committee/workgroups to share and monitor work progress.
- Set annual goals with members within committees and as a large network.
- Structure may vary and evolve. Committee work varies and evolves as needs are identified and goals are continuously assessed and modified.

GRTICN Expectations for Committee Chairs:

- Provide orientation materials to all TICN members who request to join the committee.
- Facilitate dialogue to create committee's mission, goals and activities. Ensure that everyone's voice is heard in this process. Provide support to ensure that goals and activities are implemented.
- Convene committee meetings on a regular basis (includes reservation and set-up of meeting space, reminder e-mail).
- Create meeting agendas, gather sign-in sheet to track attendance, and take minutes from committee meetings then distribute minutes via e-mail in a timely manner.
- Provide ongoing communication (e-mail, phone, in person as needed) with all committee members.
- Provide report on committee work at all larger TICN meetings.
- Assist with development of annual TICN reports to ensure that all committee information is complete within the summary.
- Post blog/updates about the committee on ACEs Connection.

TIPS

- * Provide orientation for all new members
- * Remember that there are many different reasons people come to the table and people are passionate about different areas of focus.
- * View [GRTICN Committees](#) as an example.
- * Invite guest speakers from within and outside of the network to speak on relevant topics.
- * Hold space for member spotlights, whether individual or organizational.
- * [San Diego TIGT document](#)
- * [Agenda examples](#)

KEY ELEMENT 7



Ongoing Communication & Engagement

- Develop a system for communicating and sharing resources and information between members (e.g., create a group on ACES Connection, develop a website, send monthly eNote/newsletter, etc.).
- Hold consistent, engaging meetings for the whole network. Include updates from committees, invite guest speakers, share resources, etc.
- Develop and facilitate new-member orientation meetings to provide history, mission, and expectations of network members.
- Hold trainings and public awareness events to build a shared language throughout the community.
- Offer frequent, accessible foundational trainings on ACEs, Trauma and Resilience (ATR) for new staff, volunteers and community members to attend. Trainings and public awareness events need to target all levels of a system.
- Foster an inclusive and inviting atmosphere at meetings and events

TIPS

- * Public events can include screenings of the *Resilience* and *Paper Tigers* documentaries, Ted Talk by Nadine Burke-Harris, Introduction to Trauma and Resilience Trainings.
- * Training flyer
Resilience & Paper Tigers
Zoom/Eventbrite
Resources from vendor tables
eNote examples (GRTICN & VA TICNs)
- * Provide options for virtual events (ex: Radio show/Podcast; Facebook Live; Resilience Week).
- * Share sensory items during in person meetings for members to use and to provide ideas for outside meetings (e.g., candy, fidgets, coloring).
Examples of items we use at meetings



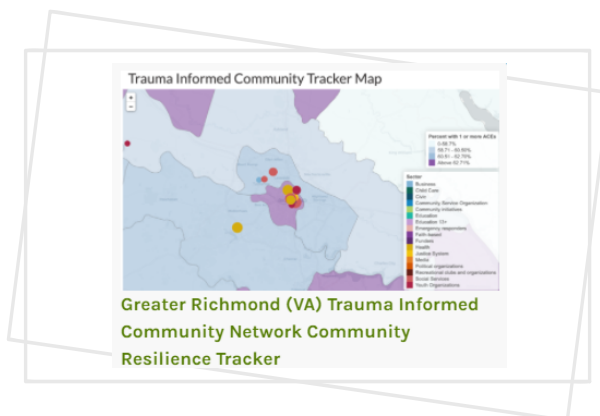
KEY ELEMENT 8



System for Measuring Outcomes

Important and challenging to measure how the network efforts impact and improve communities.

- Document network achievements
- Review of monthly, quarterly and annual progress
- Report to larger network about accomplishments
- Monthly, quarterly and annual reports
- Committee goals
- Work towards measurement of the impact of the network on the community (ACEs Tracker – absenteeism, recidivism rates, etc. – worker retention)



TIPS

- * Seek feedback from network members on a routine basis. Provide brief surveys following large meetings and trainings, send annual surveys. See [GRTICN Introduction to Trauma and Resilience Training Post-Survey](#) as an example.
- * Gather information in the moment through online polling (e.g., [Poll Everywhere](#), asking which work group to begin with)
- * [San Diego TIGT document](#)
- * Consider using the ACEs Connection Cooperative Community Tracker to learn and share about practices of network members and to track ongoing progress within different sectors



Navigating Barriers & Creating Sustainability

- Have realistic and attainable goals and expectations, recognizing individuals and systems are often traumatized and overwhelmed.
- Identify champions who will help sustain this work and support development of Trauma Informed Leadership Teams (TILT) within organizations, systems and communities.
- Develop a shared / common language around trauma and ACES by offering frequent, accessible foundational trauma trainings for new staff, volunteers and community members.
- Target leaders of a system, organization and /or community to elicit buy in and commitment.
- Formally acknowledge challenges and barriers, such as frequent staff turnover; lack of system readiness or administrative buy in; being overwhelmed at where to start or how much work this will entail; etc.
- Acknowledge, explicitly name, and talk about the historical and systemic trauma within the community and the racial, cultural and socioeconomic issues impacting the work.
- Avoid working in silos and make efforts to share, collaborate and communicate across organizations and systems.
- Build training expertise and capacity across the network.
- Engage individuals and/or organizations recognizing need for more trauma informed and trauma sensitive practices within the community.
- Hold forums and conversations within the community around unmet needs regarding trauma.



TIPS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

- * Celebrate successes, however big or small.
- * Stay current and provide information on trends and needs.
- * Keep an ongoing focus on building community resilience (e.g., [Resilience Week VA](#), [Acts of Kindness week](#)).
- * Explore common challenges within [MARC document Building Stronger Networks](#).

APPENDIX A

GRTICN Coordinator Responsibilities



Greater Richmond SCAN, as the backbone agency of the Greater Richmond Trauma Informed Community Network (GRTICN), is responsible for:

1. Providing oversight of GRTICN Committees by scheduling, planning and facilitating committee meetings; assisting with committee work; maintaining communication with committee members and disseminating information (e.g., meeting minutes, relevant resources/training info, monthly/bi-monthly eNote, etc); and convening and facilitating quarterly GRTICN Committee Chair meetings.
2. Convening, planning and facilitating bi-monthly GRTICN meetings.
3. Providing follow up communication after each large GRTICN meeting (meeting minutes, resources, responding to requests, etc).
4. Responding to requests from committee chairs re: meeting/training space needs.
5. Receiving and responding to e-mails from current and prospective GRTICN members (e.g., requests to meet/train, connect with network members, send information).
6. Organizing and facilitating quarterly GRTICN New Member Orientation Meetings and providing follow up after orientation (e.g., adding to GRTICN listserv, connecting with Committee Chairs as requested, providing information regarding upcoming meetings).
7. Planning, convening and facilitating GRTICN sponsored events in the community (e.g., screenings of Paper Tigers, Resilience) and providing coverage for vendor fair events
8. Maintaining up to date list of all GRTICN member agencies.
9. Managing GRTICN webpage and social media.
10. Communicating the work of the GRTICN through spotlights and stories.
11. Sending information out to members at the request of other GRTICN members OR post to ACES Connection.
12. Serving as Community Managers on ACES Connection Cooperative of Communities, Greater Richmond TICN and Becoming Trauma-Informed and Beyond ACES Connection Communities.
13. Participating in various local and state committees and workgroups.
14. Collaborating with advocacy and policy community partners.
15. Connecting with national efforts (via ACES Connection site, Mobilizing Action for Resilience Communities, etc.)
16. Supervising and providing instruction for students assigned to work with the GRTICN.
17. Completing monthly, quarterly and annual reports.

APPENDIX B

GRTICN Informational Card Template



Greater Richmond Trauma-Informed Community Network

The Greater Richmond Trauma-Informed Community Network (GRTICN) of Virginia is a multi-sector community collaborative convened by Greater Richmond SCAN (Stop Child Abuse Now), that shares a commitment towards the creation of a more trauma-informed and resilient community within the Greater Richmond region. The GRTICN works towards preventing and mitigating the impact of adverse childhood experiences and building individual and community resilience. The GRTICN was formed in the fall of 2012 and is currently comprised of over 500 community members and more than 175 different organizations representing a wide range of systems that include public, private, non-profit, state and local government agencies.

The Greater Richmond TICN has several committees that carry out our efforts. TICN committees include: **Brief Screening Tool, Community Resilience, Healthcare Committee, Legal/Courts, Outcomes, Policy, Training, Schools and Workforce Development.**

If you are interested in joining the Greater Richmond TICN or have questions about our work, please contact Lisa Wright at lwright@grscan.com or Melissa McGinn at mmginn@grscan.com

Membership on the Greater Richmond TICN

Steps to join:

1. Contact GRTICN Coordinator, Lisa Wright, at lwright@grscan.com
2. Attend a GRTICN New Member Orientation Meeting
3. Consider joining a GRTICN Committee
4. Attend large GRTICN meetings and GRTICN Committee meetings

Membership benefits include:

- ◇ Join a group of talented and highly motivated individuals in creating a trauma-informed community in Greater Richmond
- ◇ Work collaboratively with others in a GRTICN Committee
- ◇ Have a space to be heard
- ◇ Receive monthly eNotes with GRTICN updates and trauma-informed resources
- ◇ Participate in conversations and information sharing on ACEs Connection



APPENDIX C

GRTICN MOU

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) (11.2020)

Between Greater Richmond Trauma-Informed Community Network (GRTICN) and

GRTICN Member: _____
(PRINT NAME)

Vision: A trauma-informed and resilient community within the Greater Richmond (VA) region.

Mission: The Greater Richmond TICN aims to build a more equitable, safe, trauma-informed, and resilient community by informing, supporting, and elevating the Greater Richmond (VA) region. GRTICN's mission is driven by the following priorities: preventing and mitigating the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs); advancing trauma-informed practice and policies; and advocating for trauma-informed system change.

We believe in:

A Whole-Community Approach: We consider environmental, cultural, and societal factors in order to serve all community members with compassion, humility, and respect.

A Trauma-informed Lens: We cultivate emotional, psychological, and physical safety for all community members through education, advocacy, and support.

Social Justice & Equity: We celebrate difference, acknowledge racism and other forms of systemic and historical oppression, and operate through an equity lens.

Inclusive Membership: We foster diversity and inclusion as we co-create a network that is inviting and safe for everyone and where everyone's voice can be heard.

Cross-Sector Collaboration: We honor partnerships and collaborations with community members and organizations across all systems and sectors.

Growth & Innovation: We strive to identify and remain adaptive to the needs of the community.

The GRTICN will strive to:

1. Uphold our values and mission.
2. Ensure all [responsibilities of the backbone agency](#) are fulfilled.
3. Lead engagement in the ACEs Connection Cooperative of Communities.
4. Maintain the [GRTICN website](#).

As a party to this MOU, I join with the GRTICN in my understanding that:

- A proven correlation exists between the occurrence of early life adversity and trauma (including generational, systemic and historical trauma) and serious and costly medical, psychological, and behavioral problems in adulthood;

APPENDIX C

GRTICN MOU

- The GRTICN is committed to addressing the causes and consequences of previously unrecognized and unaddressed trauma through coordinated and comprehensive community efforts. This commitment includes a dedication to the incorporation of an equity lens in all work; and
- The GRTICN actively supports the vision and purpose of all communities that provide their citizens with trauma-related resources: education, guidance, prevention, and assistance with healing.

I will strive to:

1. Attend GRTICN meetings that occur every other month;
2. Join in the work of the GRTICN (join a committee, work groups, participate in meetings, share opportunities for learning with the larger group, etc.)
3. Incorporate trauma-informed practice within my home, workplace, and community;
4. Provide input and feedback for the GRTICN (during meetings, on surveys, etc); and
5. Participate in projects and programs that address the mission of the GRTICN.

As a GRTICN Member, I agree also to:

1. Keep informed of trauma-informed practice resources and community resilience building efforts through a free online subscription to [ACEs Connection](#);
2. Become more aware and expand my understanding of the impact of trauma by reviewing the Adverse Childhood Experiences Scale and Resilience questionnaires; and
3. Practice and promote trauma sensitivity among my friends, family, co-workers, and community members.

This MOU will remain in effect indefinitely; either party may terminate the MOU upon written notice to the other.

Signature of Welcome to the GRTICN:

GRTICN Member

Date

GRTICN Coordinator

Date

I would like to join the GRTICN ACEs Connection Cooperative of Communities.

Individually _____ (initial) or through agency affiliation _____ (initial)

If agency affiliation, please list agency name _____

***In the event that you join the Cooperative through agency affiliation and later leave the agency, please notify the GRTICN coordinators and connect us with another agency representative.**

SPECIAL THANKS

TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES FOR
SUPPORTING THE GRTICN



AND TO OUR FRIENDS & PARTNERS FROM THE
GRTICN AND ALL VIRGINIA TICNS



Greater Richmond
Trauma-Informed Community Network





January 2021

Greater Richmond SCAN (Stop Child Abuse Now)

103 E Grace Street

Richmond, Virginia 23219

www.grscan.com

[GRTICN webpage](#)

