## Matrix of Trauma-Sensitive Strategies of School Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Element</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Related Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment             | Empathy           | - Actively Listen  
- Normalize the reaction to the experience  
- Minimize self-blame  
- Avoid giving direct advice |
|                                                        | Strengths-based approach | - Deliberately point out actions and characteristics that are positive, unique, or valuable  
- Guide a student towards recognizing and using his or her strengths  
- Redirect a challenging behavior by focusing on what you know the student can do well |
|                                                        | Predictability    | - Be clear about expectations  
- Follow through  
- Keep a consistent routine  
- Talk through changes |
|                                                        | Prevention rather than punishment | - Help the student identify triggers and create appropriate coping plans  
- Teach or demonstrate what “should” be done  
- Avoid punishment and isolation  
- Reward positive behavior to encourage and build confidence  
- Teach mindfulness |
|                                                        | Welcoming building environment | - Make sure that classrooms and hallways are bright and clean  
- Don’t corner someone  
- Consider having a “safe corner” or a “peace room”  
- Greet students at the door  
- Make sure transition times are supervised |
|                                                        | Connection to school community | - Institute a peer buddy program  
- Institute a student/adult mentorship program  
- Deliberately connect students to extracurricular activities  
- Use a team approach |
|                                                        | Partnership, not power | - Avoid power/control struggles  
- Do not “corner” someone emotionally  
- Help individual students find coping strategies for stressors |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Fostering Secure Attachments</strong></th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Help children identify safe people to talk to in the school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                                  | • Be available  
• Be consistent  
• Make sure the student knows that he can go to you in a crisis  
• Encourage self-motivation  
• Help students set goals and create strategies for reaching those goals | • Post the names and roles of key school staff  
• Let students know how to contact a safe adult  
• Set clear expectations and boundaries |
|                                  | Help patient and consistent | • Give unconditional support  
• Set high expectations  
• Lead by example |
|                                  | Family programming | • Host family nights or other events  
• Make an effort to meet the caregivers where they are  
• Don’t engage in negative conversation about a family |
|                                  | Helping a child to cope | • Breathing for relaxation  
• Positive distractions  
• Promote leadership  
• Encourage peer support  
• Ensure children have a healthy diet  
• Ensure children have plenty of exercise |
|                                  | Use a team approach | • Stress inclusiveness and shared purpose  
• Share updates and successful strategies with other staff as appropriate |
| **Strengthening Non-Cognitive Skills** | Focus on “what happened to you” rather than “what is wrong with you” | • Ask more questions and listen to the answers  
• Watch for patterns and triggers  
• Keep in mind the student’s history |
| *(i.e. social-emotion skills and self-regulation.)* | Encourage resiliency | • Focus on strengths, not deficit  
• Praise effort, not just outcomes  
• Focus on “should” rather than “should not” |
|                                  | Teach coping techniques | • Talk about self-soothing  
• Talk about self-regulation  
• Help the student identify triggers and strategies  
• Show students where/how they have control |
|                                  | Empower students | • Encourage intrinsic motivation  
• Build self-confidence  
• Promote leadership |