

Restoring Hope and Healing from Trauma

When a student's brain is in survival mode due to post-traumatic stress or threats of danger, they require extra attention from professionals at their schools and community support services. Ample research shows the behavioral, cognitive and physical impacts of trauma across the span of a child's life. We can identify these students and intervene early with a multidisciplinary and trauma-informed approach. This can reduce the long-term health risks associated with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

Delivering Assistance

The TEAR team implements the Handle With Care program in local school districts to support children exposed to trauma and violence through improved communication between law enforcement and schools.

Handle With Care (HWC) promotes partnerships aimed at ensuring children who are exposed to trauma receive appropriate interventions to help them succeed academically.

Handle With Care Notice

Law enforcement officers, first responders or social service workers should scan the QR code at right after encountering a traumatic event where a child is present or could be affected by the outcome.



AIU Family Centers

Our family centers support all families, including those experiencing trauma. There are many ways we can help. We can provide the following:

- Diapers and baby items
- Early childhood education
- Family activities
- Food and toiletries
- Resources and referrals
- Parenting support
- Play groups
- Pregnancy support
- School support



Family and
Community
Education
Services

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23-059



TEAR PROGRAM

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TRAUMA
EDUCATION
AND
RESPONSE



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What is TEAR?

Trauma Education and Response (TEAR) is a community approach to serving and supporting school-age children who have experienced a traumatic event when law enforcement has been engaged with a family. The AIU's TEAR team started its work in the Highlands School District and now services the Clairton City, New Kensington-Arnold, Steel Valley, West Mifflin and Woodland Hills School Districts.



What Our TEAR Team Does

Using a community approach in collaboration with law enforcement, school districts and community service sectors, we bridge the gap between families and resources to ensure no child falls through the cracks.

1. Law enforcement notifies the TEAR team at the Highlands Family Center to work with school district staff and family center staff to provide support and resources to the impacted family.
2. School district staff prepare strategies to support the impacted children and the family center works to ensure family needs are met.
3. Additionally, training is provided to community members to raise awareness about the impact of trauma on a child's development.



The TEAR Team, L-R: Mikalyn Wheeler, Jeannie Dennis, Rayne Plance and Crystal Castiglione.

Our Staff

The staff of the TEAR team consists of members of the AIU's Family Centers. Please reach out to them with any questions you may have about the TEAR program.

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Training

The TEAR team offers free trauma-focused training sessions for:

- Caregivers
- Community support agencies
- Community members
- First responders
- Parents
- Police departments
- School administrators and staff
- Teachers

Training sessions are based on the six principles of trauma-informed care:

- Collaboration and mutuality
- Cultural issues
- Empowerment, voice and choice
- Peer support
- Safety
- Trustworthiness and transparency

Why Handle With Care Is Important

Handle With Care (HWC) programs employ Trauma Education and Response to promote safe and supportive homes, schools and communities that protect children and help traumatized children thrive.

HWC programs promote partnerships between schools and communities to ensure children who are exposed to trauma receive appropriate interventions.

When the appropriate actions are taken, children are able to face their trauma and succeed in the classroom.