

2020: Year in Review

Shout Out to Virginia HEALS Early Implementers: Champions of Trauma-Informed Care

Despite a bit of a delay in the statewide rollout of the Virginia HEALS model of service delivery and an overall shift in priorities for all service providers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many individuals and groups have taken leadership in not only being trained in but also implementing, Community Resource Mapping (CRM), the Screening for Experiences and Strengths (SEAS), and the Referral and Response Protocol (RRP), and other toolkit resources.

"I feel fortunate to have been a part of the first training of the Virginia HEALS program in Loudoun County.... Using...SEAS will allow all service providers and organizations involved to have a standardized reference for the degree of trauma that the individual or family faced, allowing an ease of linking the services of care needed our clients. I am excited to be a part of this for Loudoun County."
(Eleanor Huff, Empower Resiliency Counseling Center)

The Loudoun County Trauma-Informed Community Network invited Virginia HEALS staff to facilitate a toolkit overview in February 2020, and they were the first TICN to host a virtual resource mapping event in September. In October, 31 service providers representing all major child, youth, and family-serving systems participated in a four-hour training on SEAS and the RRP. Since that time, many of those who attended have already begun to implement Virginia HEALS screening and referral practices.

"The Greater Prince William TICN members truly believe that embracing and implementing this model will continue our focus in meeting the needs of people affected by trauma in a collaborative and connected system." (Heather Martinsen, Prince William County Community Services)

In the Eastern Shore, Virginia HEALS project staff provided a toolkit overview to the TICN in late 2019. Following that presentation, staff facilitated a live CRM event in February 2020 (segments of which were filmed and featured in the corresponding e-learning course on mapping). A half-day training on SEAS and the RRP is scheduled to take place in mid-December, and it is anticipated that many participants will

implement screening and/or referral practices in coming months.

The Greater Prince William Trauma-Informed Community Network, which hosted a Virginia HEALS presentation in February, embraced the initiative and planned a CRM event in the spring of 2020. This event was disrupted by the pandemic, so the network members encouraged each other to take the e-learning courses on the SEAS and RRP throughout the summer and fall.

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A Timely Collaboration: Virginia's Participation in a National Governors Association Learning Collaborative

In the spirit of collaboration, Virginia HEALS has worked with a small group of key partners engaged in a learning collaborative with the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Virginia Office of the Secretary of Health & Human Resources. The Learning Collaborative, *Improving Well-being and Success of Children & Families -- Addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)*, aims to develop and sustain strategies to prevent and mitigate ACEs from a state-level, public policy perspective.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the goals and priorities of the collaborative, and of Virginia's efforts, shifted to address the most pressing needs of Virginians. What emerged from a series of meetings between Virginia's Trauma-informed Leadership Team (TILT) and the NGA was the immediate need to share information across agencies and systems in an effort to ensure a trauma-informed COVID-response that supported the many social-emotional and physical needs of children and youth, as well as frontline service providers.

The collaborative, which convenes four states (VA, DE, PA, and WY), allows Virginia to learn best practices from across the country. While a significant focus of the collaborative to date has been on mitigating childhood trauma throughout the pandemic, overwhelming evidence and experience from within Virginia, and other states around the country, indicates that any formal response to pandemic-related trauma should strongly consider the identification and tracking of adverse childhood

The Advocacy Subcommittee has identified linking systems of care as one of its core efforts in 2021. With that focus, a virtual CRM event has been scheduled for January 2021 with a SEAS and RRP training following.

Virginia HEALS project staff have also facilitated system-specific training on the SEAS, RRP, and other toolkit items to service providers in victim advocacy, criminal/juvenile justice, behavioral health, education, and child welfare. Feedback indicates that many of the participants in these trainings are or will be early implementers of the model of service delivery and supporting toolkit as well.

If you would like to discuss hosting a cross-systems training for your community-based multi-disciplinary team or a system-specific training for your network of service providers, just contact a Virginia HEALS team member!

"We are now using the SEAS...with children coming into shelter."

"Our children's services coordinator has already started to screen using the SEAS."

(Domestic Violence Program Staff)

Full Virginia HEALS Toolkit Now Available!

A toolkit of resources including a trauma screening tool, a referral and response protocol, and several trainings was designed to support community and state-level implementation of the Virginia HEALS Model for the provision of services and referrals to children, youth, and families. The [Virginia HEALS Toolkit](#) includes:

Community Resource Mapping

The Community Resource Mapping Facilitation Guide can be used within local communities to identify current resources, learn about gaps between current resources and community needs, and provide an opportunity to cultivate new partnerships and relationships across agencies that work with children and youth in the community. An e-Learning course is available to support this guide.

Trauma and Victimization Screening

The [Trauma-Informed Screening Course](#) is designed to assist service child, youth, and family serving providers in integrating an understanding of trauma into their daily practice and provide guidance as to the importance of integrating screening for trauma into their work with children and families. Specific attention will be given to creating and promoting emotional safety before, during, and after a trauma disclosure as well as addressing concerns about re-traumatization.

The *Screening for Experiences and Strengths (SEAS)* is a brief screening tool that has been developed by Virginia HEALS to identify trauma and victimization experiences and symptoms in children, youth, and transitioning young adults. The [Screening for Experiences and Strengths e-Learning Course](#) will provide guidance on preparing to screen, how to

experiences and then prioritize coordinated support for individuals experiencing trauma.

A memo co-authored by the NGA and the TILT highlighted the need to reexamine existing cross-system trauma-response projects, such as Virginia HEALS, and reimagine how they can be used to mitigate pandemic-related trauma.

Simultaneously, several new collaborations have aligned Virginia HEALS with other child and youth-serving state agencies: Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services (DBHDS), Department of Education (DOE), and VDSS. These collaborative efforts will:

1. address the need for better communication and information-sharing system-wide;
2. reduce the duplication of trauma-response efforts from children and youth; and
3. better support frontline service providers as they aim to serve individuals in communities.

Virginia HEALS Statewide Rollout Trainings

30 facilitated training sessions (October-December 2020)

- Over **650** participants
- Continued follow-up/technical assistance post-training to assist with implementation
- **30** training sessions conducted October- November
- **Workshops:** 12 Toolkit Overview, 6 Referral and Response Protocol (RRP), 6 SEAS
- **4** "Full Toolkit" Trainings for TICNs and state agencies/systems (Toolkit Overview, SEAS, and RRP)
- **2** tailored trainings for state agencies/systems
- Participants represent all systems: advocacy, behavioral health, criminal and juvenile justice, child welfare, housing, healthcare, and education

access and administer SEAS, and how to respond to trauma disclosures. Completion of training on SEAS is required to access the screening tool.

Referral and Response

The [Referral and Response Protocol](#) provides guidance to agency/organizational leadership and multi-disciplinary teams on specific components that support successful referrals and referral responses, and outlines a distinct process for front line service providers on how to link children, youth, and families to needed services and support. An [e-Learning course](#) is available to support the protocol.

Family Engagement

The [Family Engagement Guide](#) provides child, youth, and family-serving agencies and systems with guidance on how and why to meaningfully engage family members in decision-making processes around the content and direction of services, interventions, and/or referrals made in the course of case management and planning. An [e-Learning course](#) is available to support this guide.

Trauma-Informed Agency Assessment

The [Trauma-Informed Agency Self-Assessment](#) was created for agencies and organizations from a variety of fields (child welfare, behavioral health, public health, juvenile justice, education, early childhood development, housing, and victim advocacy) to assess where they fall in a continuum of trauma-informed care and to engage them in a process of setting agency improvement goals.

E-learning Courses

A series of [E-Learning courses](#) that complement the Virginia HEALS toolkit is available at <http://virginiaheals.com/training>



ABOUT

Virginia HEALS is a model of service delivery that has been developed to assist service providers in better linking systems of care and providing support and care to children, youth, and families impacted by trauma and/or victimization.

This model, and the toolkit which supports it, is intended to be adopted and implemented at the community level by child, youth, and family serving organizations and service providers from child welfare, advocacy, education, juvenile justice, behavioral health, and public health.

- Project staff available to provide follow-up/technical assistance post- training to assist with implementation
- **182** e-Learning Course participants^[1]

[1]. This number is based upon the number of individuals who accessed the certificate pages at the end of each e-learning module.

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