

A Coalition in the Business of Compassion

GETTING STARTED. The Kansas City metropolitan area spans eight counties in two states. When Marsha Morgan convened the first [Trauma Matters KC](#) (TMKC) meeting in February 2012, trauma champions from both sides of the Missouri river joined forces.

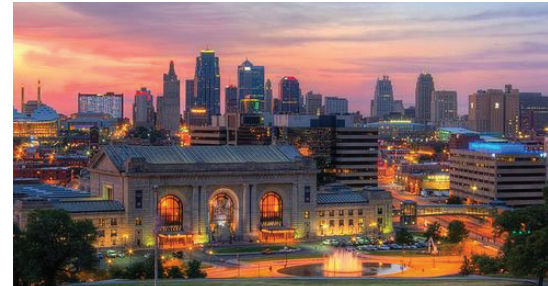
Agencies within the two states had followed slightly different paths. In Missouri, the Department of Mental Health had created a statewide group of “early adopters” – community mental health centers, residential programs and other agencies committed to becoming trauma-informed. In Kansas, the [Johnson County Trauma-Informed Task Force](#), with 16 participating agencies organized under United Community Services, provided leadership. By 2012, there was growing support for community-wide action. The city faces significant social challenges, including large income disparities. For example, Johnson County is one of the richest counties in the nation, while Wyandotte County is one of the most economically challenged. In a 2011 needs assessment, pediatricians, nurses, mental health providers, teachers, families and adolescents all identified addressing trauma and building resilience as a priority.

Members from 12 organizations attended the first meeting of TMKC. Since then, the group has developed a mission statement, organized subcommittees, and conducted community trainings and events. Membership currently includes more than 40 organizations and 100 individuals.

The *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration* (SAMHSA) has a long-standing commitment to addressing the impact of trauma on individuals and communities. The **SAMHSA Spotlight Series** highlights different approaches to building trauma-informed, resilient communities. A setting is trauma-informed if the people in that setting *realize* the widespread prevalence of trauma, *recognize* the signs and symptoms, *respond* in an understanding and supportive manner, and *resist* doing further harm.

The goals of the **Spotlight** series are to:

1. Highlight innovative approaches to trauma-informed community change.
2. Provide information to other communities interested in becoming trauma-informed.



POPULATION: 2.1 million

FOUNDED: in early 1800's by fur traders; grew rapidly after Civil War as center of cattle industry

Spans boundary between Missouri and Kansas

Resting spot for Lewis and Clark expedition

Known for jazz and sports; hosts professional baseball, football, soccer, and NASCAR racing

Boasts more barbecue restaurants than any other city and more outdoor fountains than any city except Rome

Recently named one of top 30 cities for young entrepreneurs

Home to several well-known foundations supporting health and educational research



The Change Process

FOCUS ON SECONDARY TRAUMA: FIRST RESPONDERS AND TEACHERS

First responders and teachers play essential roles in community well-being, and both groups experience significant on-the-job stress. First responders encounter trauma daily, and are known to have high levels of alcohol use, suicide, divorce, and burnout. Teachers can be deeply affected by trauma in the lives of their students. In the past two years, TMKC has partnered with police and schools to build resilience in the workforce and to introduce trauma-sensitive practices.



Captain Darren Ivey,
Commander of CIT program
and coordinator of police
trauma training

developed a discrete four-hour interactive training program called *Building Resilience: Surviving Secondary Trauma*. This training is offered twice a month, at no cost, to all first responders. Participants have noted that the training helped them understand that the very thing that makes them good at their jobs – their desire to help – can make them vulnerable to secondary traumatic stress. To date, 200 people have taken the course. Afterwards, it is common for trainees to make comments like: “Why didn’t we know this before?” and “We want more of this.”

The Kansas City Trauma Sensitive Schools (TSS) initiative began in 2013 with a meeting with area Principals, a presentation to the Board of Education, training for school counselors and nurses, and identification of schools to participate in a pilot project. In its first two years, TSS trained more than 80 educators and worked with more than 1300 students. Teachers report that the training has had a positive effect on both their personal and professional lives. They are implementing trauma sensitive practices in the classroom, and using “professional self-care plans” has helped create a more rewarding teaching experience. Students also report using new resilience tools and skills. Nine additional schools and school districts have requested or received consultation. As they begin their third year, the TSS team has identified several critical factors in implementing change in a large school system, including internal resilience champions, support from school leadership, focus on staff self-care, building staff capacity, and allowing sufficient time to build trusting relationships and time for self-study and coaching.

TMKC is working for widespread change, and their goal is to have as many people and groups as possible involved.

The first step for law enforcement was integrating information about trauma into specialized mental health training for Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT). CIT training includes both front line officers and leadership, and is always at full capacity. As part of the new module on trauma, officers evaluate their own Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) scores and learn resilience-building techniques. The new information was so well received that the department

Spotlight on Implementation

LEADERSHIP. TMKC is neither a traditional organization nor an issue-based coalition with fixed membership. They are working for widespread change, and their goal is to have as many people and groups as possible involved. They chose as their model a new form of organization called a “[movement network](#).” Movement networks reflect the complexity of social problems, balancing the needs of individual members with collective action, maintaining fluid structures, and distributing leadership. Following this model, Marsha Morgan, the first Chair of the group, soon turned the reins over to co-chairs from Kansas and Missouri. Together they have made leadership development an ongoing activity. Monthly meetings are open, decision-making is by consensus, and a guest speaker – either a trauma survivor or a local agency representative – is featured each month. Afterwards, one of the more established members stays on to make sure new participants are oriented to the group and know that their contributions are welcome.



TMKC members with original logo.

CROSS SECTOR COLLABORATION. One of the most striking aspects of TMKC is the breadth of community involvement. At any monthly meeting you might find a landscape architect whose designs promote resilience, a judge who runs a trauma-informed court, an author or journalist who wants to learn more, a sports coach concerned about the young people on his team, or a community planner considering implications for urban development. The business community also plays an important role. In 2015, the KC Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with KC Blue Cross and Blue Shield, issued a plan for [Healthy KC](#) that includes a specific recommendation that their members become trauma-informed.

SAMHSA'S IMPLEMENTATION DOMAINS

SAMHSA has identified 10 domains that are essential to the implementation of trauma-informed approaches in both organizations and communities. Domains highlighted in this document are indicated by arrows. For further information, see [SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach](#).

- ▶ **1. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP** communicate and support the vision of a trauma-informed community.
2. Policy is reshaped to be trauma-informed.
3. Physical environment promotes safety and resilience.
4. Engagement and Involvement of all citizens and organizations is encouraged; no group is excluded.
- ▶ **5. CROSS SECTOR COLLABORATION** is the norm.
6. Screening, assessment, and treatment are in place for identifying and responding to trauma.
7. Training and workforce development are available for organizations and for the general public.
8. Monitoring and quality assurance processes are used uniformly to inform and improve services.
9. Financing mechanisms make trauma-informed programs and trauma specific services sustainable.
10. Evaluation data are collected from a variety of perspectives.

Kansas City Highlights

- Crittenden Children’s Center has developed a trauma-informed Head Start program called [Head Start-Trauma Smart](#) that is now nationally known as a best practice.
- The TMKC public awareness committee has partnered with a local violence prevention project, [Aim4Peace](#), to help participants understand the impact of trauma and promote resilience.
- Local foundations, including the REACH Foundation, the Healthcare Foundation of Greater KC, and the Jackson County Mental Health Fund, have recognized the importance of the effort by providing financial support.
- In the spring of 2014, the first citywide “Resilience Day” was held. A weekly e-newsletter, the [Resilience Register](#), currently goes directly to almost 600 recipients.
- Several behavioral health agencies have been certified or recognized for excellence in trauma services, including [Cornerstones of Care](#) (certified in the [Sanctuary Model](#)) and KVC Health Systems (recognized as Center of Excellence in [Trauma Systems Therapy](#).)

MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE: People in Kansas City are now involved in addressing toxic stress, trauma, and resilience.

COMMUNITY TO COMMUNITY SHARING. TMKC drew inspiration from a number of sources, including [Peace4Tarpon](#) in Florida; the state of Wisconsin’s [Shift Your Perspective](#) initiative; Canada’s [Handbook on Sensitive Practices for Health Care Professionals](#); and the [Anna Institute](#). Kansas City played a key role in the development of a statewide developmental model for implementing trauma-informed approaches. Following the SAMHSA community trauma meeting in May 2015, several communities from across the country have contacted TMKC for assistance in developing police trauma training initiatives.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Trauma Matters KC
<http://www.marc2.org/traumamatterskc/>

The Missouri Model: A Developmental Framework for Trauma-Informed”
<http://dmh.mo.gov/trauma/>



Trauma Matters KC logo, designed to convey a spirit of growth, resilience and compassion.

