

"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." - Helen Keller



## STAY CONNECTED



*ECTIC Newsletter Volume 2 | 2020*

## Connection to family, friends, and community builds belonging and buffers against stress.

It is with much admiration for our resilient community that we share this newsletter with you this winter season. While the air may be brisk, our warm wishes are with you for a safe, healthy, and restorative 2021.

For most of us, social connections look and feel much different in COVID-19 times; but, the powerful and lasting positive impact of genuine human connection has never been more needed. Now, more than ever, it is so important that we continue to reach out, check in, and stay in touch with our friends, neighbors, family, colleagues, and community.

The ECTIC newsletter is another strategy to help us all stay connected between community meetings, events, and trainings. You can expect to read about ECTIC efforts, resiliency building strategies, and opportunities to get involved!

### In This Issue

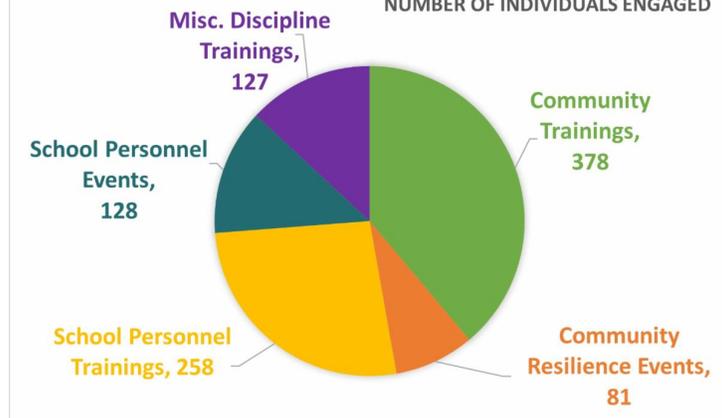
- Annual Impact Brief
- 2021 Coalition Strategic Priorities
- Coping with COVID-19 & the Holidays
- Training Opportunities & Resilience Resources
- Trauma Informed PA Plan Update
- 2020 Reflection



### Annual Impact

The coalition volunteers and Executive Committee organizations persevered through the trials of the year to provide a range of free and virtually adapted capacity building opportunities for all interested and willing community members.

## 2020 LOCAL ECTIC IMPACT NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED



Opportunities ranged from trauma awareness and community building events to professional development trainings for **over 970** local individuals.

ECTIC continued to support Commonwealth efforts to become a Trauma-Informed PA. An additional **770+ local and state-wide individuals** virtually attended the **7<sup>th</sup> Annual Trauma-Informed & Resilient Communities Conference** aimed at honing resilience to bounce back beyond a pandemic. ECTIC members helped to plan, present, and facilitate the conference in collaboration with Erie and Crawford County DHS, Erie System of Care, and Peace4Crawford.



ECTIC also **sponsored 10 individuals** representing four local school districts, one higher education institution, the Tri-County Intermediate Unit #5, and the Highmark Caring Place to attend the **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Creating Trauma Sensitive Schools Conference** in Atlanta, GA in February. Attendees participated in local learning cooperative discussions to share resources and strategies gained from the conference.

## Planning for Our Future

The coalition is hopeful that the New Year will bring opportunities for growth and healing for individuals, systems, and the community. Throughout the past year, ECTIC spent time assessing our internal infrastructure and working to understand how we can adapt and respond to the community's vast needs.

2020 shed light on not just one virus plaguing our world, but a second one, racism. Racism and hate in all its forms has contributed to oppression, despair, and inequities for far too long. **We know that if we are not addressing racism, we are not addressing trauma. As a coalition, we are committed to the pursuit of racial justice and the well-being of the members of our community.** To that end, ECTIC partnered with Dr. Paris Baker in August to launch Executive Committee discussions around race, equity and inclusion recognizing that in order to reduce the impact of trauma and enhance resiliency throughout Erie County we would first have to understand how our own experiences and values shape our actions and ultimately guide the local trauma response.

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly compounded many of the existing stressors and challenges across our community. We know that people are hurting and in need of support and resources. We also have witnessed and been part of many stories of tremendous perseverance and resilience throughout the year.

Optimistic about the future, we have been identifying and applying for funding opportunities to build the Coalition's capacity and infrastructure. In October, through the generous in-kind support of Achievement Center of LECOM Health, a founding partner of ECTIC, **the Coalition brought on a part-time Coordinator**, Nicole Wells, to support the alignment of existing resources with current needs. Currently,



### 2021 Priorities

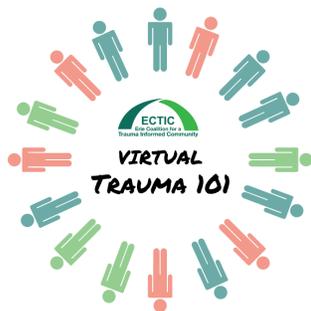
1. Complete 2021-2024 Coalition Strategic Plan
2. Raise General Public Awareness about Trauma
3. Provide Free Trauma-Informed Education Opportunities across Erie County
4. Expand Coalition's Internal and External Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Efforts

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## Training Opportunities & Resources

We're committed to continuing to offer **FREE, VIRTUAL** community capacity building opportunities for any interested and willing individuals and groups. Now you can participate in a training opportunity from a location of your choice.

We recognize, honor and respect individuals who have lived experiences with trauma. Family Services of NWPA, a founding partner of ECTIC, secured grant funding through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency (PCCD) to produce educational videos for public use. These videos can be viewed in short segments, or as one longer training video and feature personal testimonies of trauma survivors.



### Trauma 101

Trauma affects us all. Learn about the impact of toxic stress and traumatic events that overwhelm our ability to cope. Find hope through an exploration of ways to build resilience and a more connected, thriving Erie County, PA.



### Building Resilience Through Self-Care

Resiliency building strategies and self-care practices are an important part of wellness and healing. This training explores the importance of individual self-care and provides practical tips and strategies to managing stress.



### Understanding Resilience

This brief video provides an overview of what it means to be resilient with testimonials from Erie Community members who were brave enough to share their lived experience to offer hope and encouragement for healing.

[Request a free ECTIC training](#)

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## It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year?

The holiday season brings with it many of these types of sentiments, but the reality is this year is very different for many children and families.

Research has shown that children and young adults have been deeply impacted by COVID-19, including

increased [mental health visits to the emergency room](#), and [increased depression, anxiety and behavioral concerns](#). Many students are also struggling with isolation from peers, disrupted education and educational stress, and home-life stress, such as parents managing job loss or caring for ill loved ones.

If you are caring for children during this time, here are some tips that can help to keep spirits merrier and brighter, even through challenging times.

1. The struggle is real
2. Children tend to express their stress through behavior
3. Create routines
4. Children and families are incredibly resilient
5. Erie County is resource rich. ***If you are concerned for your child's safety or the safety of others, reach out.***
  - Talk to a trusted individual
  - Seek formal supports - mental health & behavioral health providers can be accessed by calling:
    - United Way's 2-1-1,
    - Erie County Care Management at (814) 528-0600, or
    - The provider agency
  - Contact Crisis Services at UPMC Western Behavioral Health at Safe Harbor 24/7/365 by calling 814-456-2014
  - Go to the nearest emergency room for evaluation.

*Mandy Fauble, PhD, LCSW, Director of Clinical Care Services at UPMC Western Behavioral Health at Safe Harbor & ECTIC Executive Committee member, shares insight on supporting individuals with mental health or behavioral health challenges with available resources.*

The full article can be found [HERE](#).

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## Trauma Tips

### Grief & Loss

#### How Do We Celebrate the Holidays Now?



Social isolation due to the coronavirus pandemic has led to a community that is grieving human connection. We are living through uncharted territory with brand new challenges. One by one, many of our normal routines, expectations, and traditions have gone by the wayside...

Disruptions to our normal activities and ways of connecting are difficult for all of us. For those who have experienced the death of a loved one, however, holidays and special events during this time can be even more challenging.

The one who died is no longer with us during these occasions. Memories of previous times of enjoyment and togetherness stand in sharp contrast to the pain of the present.

*Coalition members Conor Dawley and Janet Arida from Highmark Caring Place explore helpful reminders for those who are grieving or experiencing loss.*

[Read the full article.](#)

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### Coping with the Holidays

The holidays can bring their own special stressors—managing uncomfortable family conversations and increased social expectations, dealing with the pressures of gift-giving and financial constraints, lost relationships and loneliness, and the difficult trigger of strong emotions or traumatic experiences.

## So what can you do?

- Identify how you're **feeling**.
- **Acknowledge** what or who you've lost.
  - Take time to grieve the losses, changes, and challenges
- Try not to romanticize your typical holiday plans
  - Begin a **new tradition** this year
- Be **kind to yourself** and make **self-care** a priority
- **Know your triggers** and develop a plan to help cope
- Create **healthy boundaries**
  - Act according to your own values and beliefs
  - Say "no" without guilt
  - Say "yes" because you want to
  - Share space as you see fit, no matter what others desire
- Breathe and **practice gratitude**
- Let loved ones know how they can support you and **seek help**
- **Stick to a budget** if finances are a concern - some of the best gifts are those that are handwritten or handmade.
- If you feel lonely or isolated, **seek out** community, religious or other social networking opportunities
- **Get** back to nature
  - Spending time outdoors, even when it is cold, can help you feel relaxed
- Don't forget the basics!
  - **Sufficient Sleep, nutrition, and physical activity** help boost our immune systems and have been shown to improve mental health too.

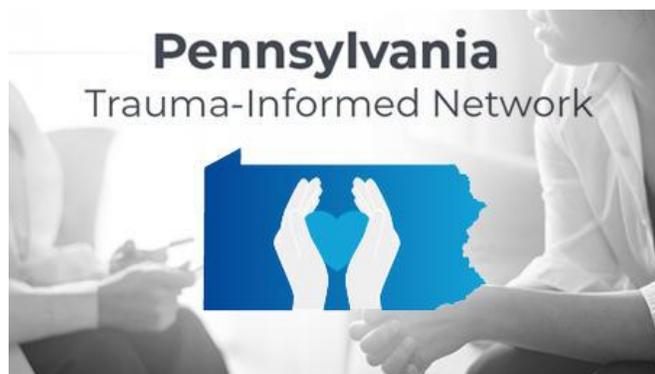


## Learn more:

- [How to Care for Your Mental Health in a Difficult Holiday Season](#)
- [Trauma Informed Self-Care for Holiday Stress](#)
- [Holiday Stress Minimizers](#)
- [Holiday Survival Guide](#)
- [Erie County Resources & Supports](#)
- [Coping with COVID series](#)



## Trauma-Informed, healing-centered PA



ECTIC is proud to have Coalition Co-Chair, Steve Minick, as a member of Governor Wolf's Trauma Informed PA Leadership Team. This team, otherwise known as HEAL PA (Healing, Empowerment, Advocacy, Learning, Prevention, Action) will set short and long term goals with recommendations that serve as a guide for the action teams in achieving the Plan's six key priorities.

Consistent with the mission and purpose of ECTIC to create a bridge to healing by building a supportive, connected community dedicated to enhancing resiliency and reducing the impact of trauma; ECTIC will seek additional representation, support the state Plan and align its strategic efforts to create a culture of hope and safety in our Erie community.

[Read about the Trauma Informed PA Plan](#)

# Shared Humanity

As 2020 draws to a close, it simultaneously marks the end and a new beginning. Like most people, I approached 2020 with great anticipation, looking to have stronger resolve and clearer vision about the future. Life is often unpredictable and plans and intentions can change rapidly. Our resolve is based on perception of success, accomplishment or even adversity. My reflections include my experiences within the context of community as well as systemic challenges over the past year. As the year unfolded, I was quickly reminded of the vulnerabilities and fragile nature of humanity. I had every intention of engaging in rich meaningful activities and having impactful encounters that would allow me enhanced opportunities of growth and change. Within the first 3 months this lens quickly shifted as COVID-19 and historic racial injustice seemed to take center stage in 2020. Reflecting back, these were stark reminders of the realities of disconnected communities, locally and globally.



[Read More](#)

*Dr. Adrienne Dixon, President & CEO of Sarah A. Reed Children's Center, and Co-Chair of ECTIC's Diversity & Belonging Workgroup reflects on 2020.*

## Have you made The Pledge?

### ECTIC HOPE AMBASSADOR

I pledged to promote a trauma-informed & resilient Erie county by:

- ATTENDING TRAUMA 101 TRAINING & COMMUNITY MEETING(S)
- CHOOSING TO SEE MORE & PRACTICING EMPATHY: WHAT'S HAPPENED? VS. WHAT'S WRONG?
- SPREADING THE WORD AND ADVOCATING FOR TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES
- PRACTICING SELF-CARE REGULARLY
- CONTRIBUTING TO ECTIC INITIATIVES WITH MY TIME, TALENTS AND/OR TREASURE



TraumaInformedErie.org



Be an ambassador for hope beyond any hurt!

More than 100 Erie County individuals have already made the pledge, are you ready to join us?

Learn more about ECTIC and make the pledge today!

[Learn More](#)



Don't forget to check out our Facebook page for weekly Trauma Tip Tuesday and Self Care Saturday posts as well as updates on coalition happenings and events.