



Handle With Care North Central / North Quabbin: Partnering for Success 2022 - 2023 School Year

Handle With Care (HWC) is a trauma-sensitive community response to support children's mental health and well-being following a traumatic event. HWC promotes safe and supportive homes, schools and communities helping children impacted by any sort of traumatic event to heal and thrive. Through police-school-community partnerships children who are exposed to trauma receive appropriate interventions to help them achieve academically at their highest levels, despite whatever traumatic circumstances they may have endured.

Collaborative effort:

School and law enforcement partners continue to deepen their trauma sensitive training and develop best practices for helping to mitigate the negative effects experienced by children's exposure to trauma.

With these skill sets we are able to provide a level of safety and support, on-site at school, to help ease the student's emotional, physical and mental health.

The program is very simple: Law enforcement officers responding to a call to identify children at the scene who have been exposed to trauma and initiate a flag of coordination to partner with the school.

The HWC notice is blind. Details are not provided. The only information given is the child's name, DOB, school and three words "*Handle with Care*". This HWC flag only identifies that an incident connected to your student occurred.

Please contact your school Administration for the HWC process developed to disseminate the HWC notice to those in contact with the student. After staff is alerted, schools implement trauma sensitive training skills to shift into *Handle With Care* mode.

When school interventions are not sufficient, therapists can provide services on site at the school (or refer to another provider) for children who may need supportive therapy.

What not to do?

We do not ask the student about their experience. Our role is not to interview, quiz, or to gain information from the student. School staff work to provide as much specialized care as possible for trauma-affected children, such as partnering them with a mentor or ensuring that they can make up missed homework. So, if the child acts out, the teacher has a heads up and might send for the student's counselor instead of sending them to the principal, or give the student extra time to do a project or postpone a test.

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Did you know?

A recent national survey of the incidence and prevalence of children's exposure to violence and trauma revealed that 60% of American children have been exposed to violence, crime or abuse. Forty percent were direct victims of two or more violent acts. Prolonged exposure to violence and trauma can seriously undermine children's ability to focus, behave appropriately, and learn in school. It often leads to school failure, truancy, suspension or expulsion, dropping out, or involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Handle with Care benefits:

- Teachers will be better able to address issues in the classroom.
- Strong positive relationship with law enforcement.

HWC has become a magnet to assist agencies in working together, build community trust and most importantly help children struggling with the effects of trauma.

Handle With Care of the North Central and North Quabbin region is a collaborative initiative that continues to deepen trauma sensitive and response practices within and across our local communities. The HWC team has also networked to spread awareness for trauma-informed care with:

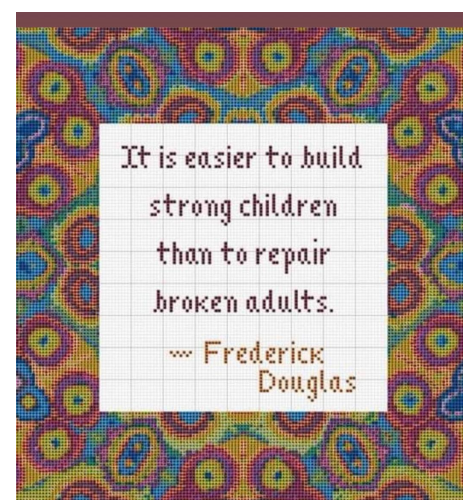
HOPE, Gardner

Boys & Girls Club, Fitchburg/Gardner/Leominster

MOC Early Education, Gardner and other locations

Gardner Public School Summer Program

Heywood Emergency Room - Athol & Gardner locations



Please view Heywood's [Handle with Care website](#) for additional information and resources.

For additional information contact HWC's Collaborative Liaison: Renee' Eldredge

e: renee.eldredge@heywood.org

HWC Collaborative Partnership:

Ashburnham-Westminster School District * Ashburnham Police Department * Athol Police Department
Athol-Royalston School District * Boys & Girls Club * Gardner Police Department * Gardner Public Schools *
Heywood Healthcare * Mahar Regional School District * MOC Early Education * Mount Wachusett Community
* Narragansett Regional School District * Petersham Police Department * Phillipston Police Department *
Templeton Police Department * Orange Police Department * Westminster Police Department * Worcester
County District Attorney, Joseph Early's Office