

Using Principles of Trauma-Informed Care to Design for Teaching and Learning

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Trauma-Informed Teaching & Learning Principles

Safety	Trustworthiness & Transparency	Support & Connection	Collaboration & Mutuality	Empowerment, Voice & Choice	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	Resilience, Growth & Change
Creating an environment that respects and accepts all individuals and helps them feel safe enough to take risks and learn from mistakes.	Making expectations clear, ensuring consistency in practice, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and minimizing disappointment.	Connecting with appropriate peer and professional resources to support academic, personal, and professional success.	Acting as allies rather than as adversaries and creating opportunities to share power and make decisions.	Building in opportunities to make choices, be heard, build skills, and develop confidence and competence.	Striving to be aware of and responsive to issues of privilege and power and respecting one another's diverse experiences, perspectives, and identities.	Recognizing strengths and resilience and providing feedback to help each other grow and change.

(Principles adapted from [Fallot & Harris, 2009](#); [SAMHSA, 2014](#))



**KEEP
CALM
YOU'RE
ALREADY
DOING IT**

What are you
already doing
that's TI?

Safety

How do you create an environment in which people feel safe, accepted, and respected, including feeling safe to make and learn from mistakes?

Examples:

- Encouraging participants to change screen name, use virtual background, or turn off camera during video meetings
- Having seating options for bodies of various sizes and abilities
- Titrating exposure
- Ensuring clear means of egress in physical and virtual spaces

Trustworthiness & Transparency

How do you make your expectations clear, ensure consistency in practice, maintain appropriate boundaries, and minimize disappointment?

Examples:

- Responding promptly to email
- Providing clear instructions
- Delivering on promises
- Being as clear as possible about the who, what, when and how of work being done

Support & Connection

How do you connect people with appropriate resources to help them succeed academically, personally, and professionally?

Examples:

- Providing referral information for institutional and community resources
- Introducing people, groups, forums (e.g., listservs, social networks, guest speakers)
- Announcing community events
- Connecting people to formal & informal mentors

Collaboration & Mutuality

How do you help people provide input, share power, and perceive you as an ally rather than an adversary?

Examples:

- Developing community guidelines or comfort agreements together
- Integrating self-evaluation
- Involving users in design
- Building bridges after conflict

Empowerment, Voice, & Choice

How do you build in opportunities to make choices, be heard, build skills, and develop confidence and competence?

Examples:

- Building in choices where possible
- Scaffolding projects
- Providing opportunities for multiple modes of expression
- Providing paid professional development training or paid time off for such training

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

How are you responsive to issues of privilege and power, and how do you acknowledge and respect diverse experiences, perspectives, and identities?

Examples:

- Using correct name and pronouns
- Addressing stereotypes, biases, microaggressions, & misinformation
- Integrating content from diverse sources and perspectives
- Creating spaces where people can speak using non-standard dialects and writing conventions

Resilience, Growth & Change

How do you recognize strengths and resilience and provide feedback that helps others grow and change?

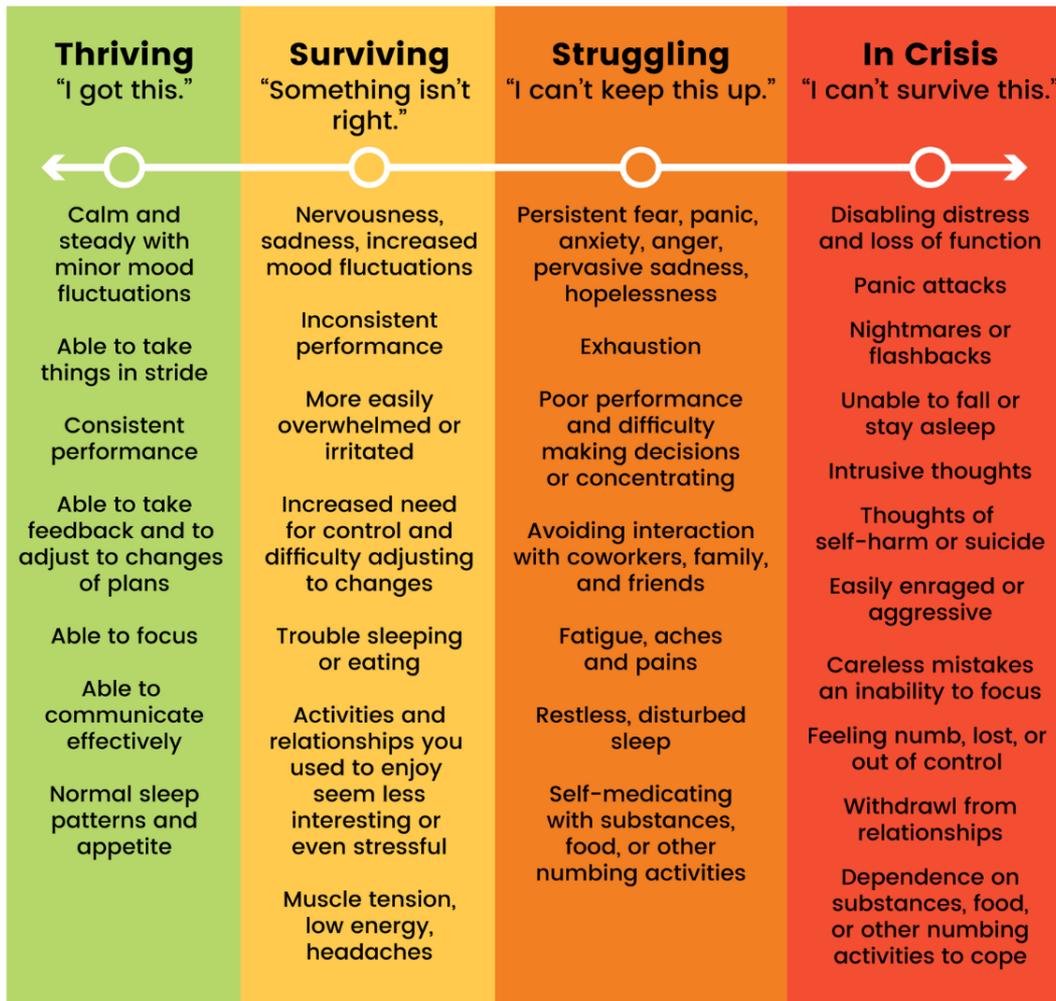
Examples:

- Pointing out what was done well or is improving
- Using language that recognizes improvement is possible (e.g. “Remember to ...”)
- Building self-care into the system
- Modeling self-compassion



Recognizing Distress

Signs of stress



- Marked decline in performance
- Excessive absences or tardiness
- Marked change in appearance or behavior
- Non-responsive to communication
- Disruptive behavior
- Exaggerated emotional response
- Depressed mood
- Confusion

Adapted from: Watson, P., Gist, R., Taylor, V. Evlander, E., Leto, F., Martin, R., Vaught, D., Nash, W.P., Westphal, R., & Litz, B. (2013). Stress First Aid for Firefighters and Emergency Services Personnel. National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

You find yourself looking for any reason to call in sick and stay in bed all day.

You dread opening your email.

You consider caffeine part of a balanced diet.

You think you will go insane if people don't stop chewing so loudly.

You always assume the worst.

You feel worse when you try to relax.

Top Signs You're Too Stressed



Common Signs of STS, VT, or Burnout

Persistent or excessive anger, guilt, or helplessness in relation to student or colleague's past or current suffering

Preoccupation with one or more students or colleagues

Excessive interest in or fascination with details of a student or colleague's trauma

Rescue fantasies

Symptoms such as headaches, sleeplessness, intrusive imagery, emotional numbing, difficulty trusting others

Feeling like nothing you do makes a difference



Preventing & Responding to Distress

What else can we do to help (re)establish a sense of control, connection, and meaning?

Be Predictable



Strive to keep well-organized



Post weekly announcements, overviews, or summaries



Limit changes and document all changes in writing



Avoid surprises



Respond promptly to emails and questions posted in online forums

Be Flexible



Focus on 1-2 objectives rather than all of them



Adapt activities that might be affected by stress such as tests and presentations



Develop no questions asked late policies

Foster Connection

RITUALS

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TEMPERATURE TAKING

Complete ONE of the following sentence starters about your course experiences in the past two weeks:

- I've learned...
- I was surprised...
- I hope...
- I liked...
- I would like...
- I'm still confused about...
- I'm feeling...
- I...

Greet People with a Smile



(Trauma-Informed Oregon, 2020)

Ask Open-Ended Questions

CLOSED QUESTIONS

Elicit *Yes, No, or I don't know* responses

May start with *Is* or *Did* or end in *isn't it* or *wouldn't you?*

Did you study?

You skipped class, didn't you?

You want to graduate, don't you?

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Elicit more in-depth responses

May start with *How, What, Tell me more*

How is studying going for you?

What's happening with class attendance?

Tell me more about your goals.

Validate

Avoid using scolding, sarcastic, or defensive language that may trigger emotional defenses. When this happens, people put energy into protecting themselves and conflicts can escalate.

I can certainly understand your wanting to reduce the number of courses you need to take if possible. I have looked at your transcripts and cannot find any courses or combinations of courses that would be considered equivalent to 601. Also, the only courses that come close were taken more than 5 years ago and are courses in which you earned less than a B grade. We also do not give credit for experience.

I know this is not what you were hoping to hear. I am sorry that I am unable to grant your request. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

I can certainly understand your frustration. Even when we know why changes are made, it can still feel disappointing. As a department, we continue to work to improve policies and procedures to minimize disappointment, and your feedback helps with that. So thank you for sharing your concerns.

Let me know if you'd like to chat more about this issue or if I can be of further assistance.

Respond with Empathy

Scenario: A student shares in a loud, angry voice:

“Why did I get such a bad grade on this test?! I’ve never gotten this bad of a grade before. This is going to mess up my course grade and my GPA and if that happens it’s going to mess up my scholarship. Then what am I going to do? It’s not fair...”

Which of the following demonstrate empathizing with the student?

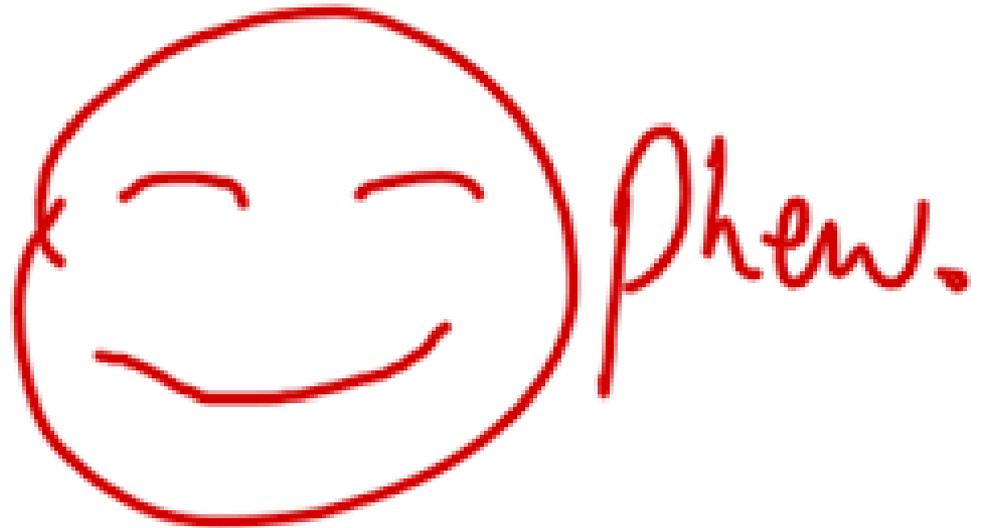
1. “You should study more next time.”
2. “Don’t worry, you’re passing the course.”
3. “I’m sorry you failed the test.”
4. “How did you fail the test if you studied?”
5. “Technically, a D is passing.”
6. “It sounds like you’re really disappointed with your grade.”

1. Advising
2. Consoling
3. Sympathizing
4. Interrogating
5. Correcting
6. Empathizing

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How do we know if empathy is working?

- Release of tension
- Flow of words halts





When all else fails, use the 3 magic words:
“Help me understand.”

Share Help- Seeking Resources

211: Call 211 to get referrals for local community services or visit the [211 website](#) for more info.

Crisis: The [National Hope Line](#) provides free 24/7 confidential crisis support in the US: call or text 1-877-235-4525.

The [Crisis Text Line](#) provides free 24/7 crisis support in the US: text HOME to 741741.

988 has been designated as the new three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) starting July 16, 2022.



Trauma- Informed Teaching Resources



Trauma-Informed Teaching & Learning

BRINGING A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Trauma-Informed Teaching & Learning in Times of Crisis

© APRIL 6, 2020 [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

Due to the covid-19 crisis, I have been getting more inquiries about trauma-informed teaching in higher education. So I created a [video presentation](#) to provide both a general overview of trauma-informed teaching as well as some specific tips and strategies that can be adapted by college educators now and in the future.

FOLLOW BLOG VIA EMAIL

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Books

- [*Trauma-Informed Pedagogies: A Guide for Responding to Crisis and Inequality in Higher Education*](#) by Thompson & Carello (Eds.)
- [*Lessons from the Pandemic: Trauma-Informed Approaches to Crisis, College, Change*](#) by Carello & Thompson (Eds.)
- [*Bandwidth Recovery*](#) by Cia Verschelden
- [*Race, Equity, and the Learning Environment: The Global Relevance of Critical and Inclusive Pedagogies in Higher Education*](#) by Tuitt, Haynes, & Stewart (Eds.)
- [*Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View*](#) by Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Eve Tuck, K. Wayne Yang (Eds.)

Books cont.

[Trauma and human rights: Integrating approaches to address human suffering](#) by Butler, Critelli, Carello (Eds.)

[What Happened to You?: Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing](#) by Oprah Winfrey & Bruce Perry

[Burnout](#) by Emily Nagoski & Amelia Nagoski

[Set Boundaries, Find Peace](#) by Nedra Glover Tawwab

Web Resources

- [Colleges and Universities for Resilience \(CURE\) Listserv](#)

To join the CURE listserv, contact Dr. Wallace E. Dixon at dixonw@mail.etsu.edu

- [Trauma-Informed Teaching & Learning Blog](#)
- [Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice \(CTIPP\)](#)
- [National Trauma Campaign](#)
- [PACEs in Higher Education](#)
- [Trauma-Informed Oregon](#)

Self-Care

- [Self-Care Starter Kit](#)
- [Self-Care in the Digital Age](#)
- [Self-Care for Educators](#)
- [*What about you? A workbook for those who work with others*](#)
- [Professional Quality of Life \(ProQOL\) Measure](#)

Psychological First Aid

- [Psychological First Aid for Schools \(PFA-S\)](#)
- [Psychological First Aid Listen, Protect, Connect \(PFA-LPC\)](#)

Course Design & Web Accessibility

- [*Culturally Inclusive Instructional Design*](#)
- [*Reach Everyone, Teach Everyone: Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education*](#)
- [Quality Matters Rubric](#)
- [Web Accessibility Guidelines](#)
- [Accessible Social](#)

Racial Equity

- [But I Didn't Mean It That Way: Microaggressions](#)
- [Why #BlackLivesMatter in Your Classroom Too](#)
- [Dear White Anthropology Grad Students](#)
- [Microaggressions in the Classroom](#)
- [Like death by a thousand cuts': How microaggressions play a traumatic part in everyday racism](#)
- [Talking about Race](#)
- [21-Day Racial Equity Challenge](#)

LGBTQ Awareness & Allyship

- [The Trevor Project](#)
- [Safe Zone Project](#)
- [Venture Out](#)
- [GLAAD](#)
- [GLSEN](#)
- [PFLAG](#)
- [Straight for Equality](#)



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