

trauma-informed teaching: developing safe learning spaces



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today's intentions

- trauma: what, why, and how
- trauma-informed care
- trauma-informed teaching
- reflection

a safe space to learn

- share the experience, save the details
 - be sure to omit names and personal details about people connected to traumatic experiences you share
- while judging is natural, keep comments to yourself while others are sharing
- push back on ideas, not people

grounding thought

Imagine you're being chased by a tiger. Your heart races as you feel a surge of adrenaline preparing your body to fight, flight, or freeze. Now imagine that right after escaping the tiger, you have to learn how to multiply fractions.

How well do you think you'd do on that task?

activity

question:

how do you define trauma?

what are some examples of traumatic experiences?

what to do:

in **pairs, discuss these questions.** be prepared to share your ideas with the whole group

trauma

what

NORMAL emotional
response to a
terrible experience

why

little awareness
about the effects of
trauma and what
trauma means

how

acute
chronic
complex
intergenerational
historical

trauma is common + collective

6% of people in the
US experience PTSD
in their life

2 out of 3 people have
had 1 ACE; 1 out of 5
have 3+

6 out of 10 women
and 5 out of ten men
have experienced
trauma

(probably doesn't
include trans/non-
binary experience)

collective trauma

- racism
- COVID-19
- gun violence
- political upheaval
- natural disasters
- healthcare

trauma-informed care

- a new movement in the medical field
- related to 'harm reduction' - started as a response to support folx that use drugs
- recognizes that childhood (and adulthood) trauma is a real factor in health and social care
- asks: what happened? rather than what's wrong?



Trauma-Informed Care Champions: From Treaters to Healers

Share



Watch on YouTube

<https://youtu.be/8wxnzVib2p4>

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applying to our work

the video focused on healthcare providers, but how can it apply to our work as social service providers?

what parallels do you see in the descriptions of the patients and your students or participants?

signs of trauma in class

- overreactions to everyday challenges
- negative outbursts or aggression
- frequent stomachaches or headaches
- appearing very sad
- inappropriate social interactions
- trouble with focus, organization, and self-regulation
- falling behind with classwork

trauma-informed teaching

- began as a way to investigate "behavior issues" in class
- revolves around creating safe and welcoming spaces for learners
- recognizes that unsupported trauma can be a barrier to learning
- is probably something you're doing already!

trauma-informed teaching

self-reflection

taking time to address our own trauma and emotions

expectations

preparing for "behavior" can help us act and support rather than react and get frustrated

welcoming

creating welcoming spaces, lessons, and interactions, can help learners feel safe from the start

trauma-informed teaching

safety

participants need to feel safe and that they're wanted in that space

power

participants need to have choices, be informed, and be decision-makers

connection

relationship building must happen before teaching can be effective

trauma-informed practices

safety

- set predictable schedules
- ask for learner input for classroom policies
- address your own trauma and be ready for triggers
- track triggers as they pop up (students' + yours)
- remind learners that they're supposed to be here (not a burden!)

trauma-informed practices

power

- offer real choices (in class and out)
- be honest of things you have to do (funders etc.)
- ask for feedback and then really make those changes
- hire learners for jobs within the organizations (not just for volunteer positions!!)
- develop student-led projects/events

trauma-informed practices

connection

- feel respect for learners (while also showing it)
- empathize with their experiences
- be authentic and share about your life (and trauma!)
- focus on strengths and what they can do
- careful that "resilience" doesn't turn into "bootstrapping"
- relationship building activities among class peers

grace for adult educators

- working with other humans is hard work
- you are also a person that has experienced trauma
- sometimes this work will trigger your trauma
- you are not alone
- you are doing a good job
- you deserve love and compassion too

learn more!

- [Trauma Impacts Adult Learners: Here's Why](#) (online article)
- [Teaching During a Pandemic: A Model for Trauma-Informed Education and Administration](#) (academic journal article)
- [Trauma-Informed Educator Checklist](#) (tool)
- [Trauma-Informed Teaching, Advising, and Learning Resource Packet](#) (guide)
- [How to Show Empathy to your Students with Compassionate Curiosity](#) (article + video)
- [How PTSD Affects Adult Learning](#) (article + video + graphics).
- [What is Trauma-Informed Teaching](#) (online article)
- [Culturally Responsive & Inclusive Curriculum Resources: What is Culturally Responsive Curriculum?](#) (article + tool)

THANK YOU

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**it was an honor to learn
with you today :)**