Trauma-Informed Practice

Resources for best practices in the classroom
For the best experience, please use Google Chrome to view the links

Trauma is everywhere

By the time they reach college, more than half of young adults have experienced at least one traumatic event ([1],[2]). Trauma is an event, series of events, or circumstances experienced by an individual as physically and emotionally harmful or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being ([3]). This commonly includes (but is not limited to) sexual assault, natural disasters, war and other forms of violence, severe accidents and medical procedures, childhood abuse and neglect, sudden loss of a loved one, and extreme poverty ([4]).

Traumatic stress can affect learning, behavior, and relationships

Traumatic Stress can occur after experiencing trauma if an individual's ability to cope is overwhelmed. The effects of trauma can vary significantly between individuals but commonly include changes in mood, memory, and behavior. This often manifests as problems with concentration, irritability, memory problems, trouble sleeping, withdrawal, anxiety, and symptoms of PTSD ([4]).

A trauma-informed classroom makes education more accessible for everyone

Trauma can impact a student's ability to obtain an education ([5],[6]). Being trauma-informed means that one 1) has a level of understanding about trauma and its impacts on the brain, body, emotions, and behavior, and 2) incorporates this understanding into policies and practices that ensure the learning environment is accessible to those impacted by trauma ([3]). Educators can incorporate the guiding principles of trauma-informed care into the classroom, even without knowing any individual's trauma history to be trauma-informed ([7],[8]).

For more information about how to become trauma informed, Click Here.

Guiding principles of trauma-informed practice

SAMHSA released a report containing the six guiding principles of trauma-informed care. Both in-person and virtual classrooms can apply these guiding principles.

1	Psychological and physical safety	4	Collaboration and mutuality
2	Trustworthiness and transparency	5	Empowerment, voice, and choice
3	Peer support and mutual self-help	6	Cultural, historical and gender responsiveness

Trauma Informed Best Practices

Recognize the signs

Provide consistent structure, and clarity

Show empathy and support positive coping

Use restorative practices over zero tolerance policies

Implement a trauma-informed pedagogy

Practice self-care