Trauma-informed Teaching

Teaching + Learning Lab

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Today, we will:

1. Reflect back on the last year.
2. Examine the impact of toxic stress on our ability to engage and learn.
3. Consider how we will move forward and support ourselves, students, and colleagues.
Stress
During the Pandemic

Uncertainty
Isolation
Loss of Meaning
Physiology

https://www.menti.com/akupt8brfj
We Feel, Therefore We Learn: The Relevance of Affective and Social Neuroscience to Education

Mary Helen Immordino-Yang and Antonio Damasio
It’s not typical stress.
It’s traumatic stress.
What is Trauma?

“What is Trauma?

“Any **negative** life event that occurs in a position of relative helplessness.”

What is Trauma?

“IT’S about being frightened or overwhelmed beyond our capacity to rebound.”
Our Sense of Resilience is Challenged
“Amygdala Hijack”

Hyperactive amygdala ➔

Stress Hormones ➔

Fight or Flight or Freeze Response ➔

Impairs Our Ability to Pay Attention,
Make Decisions, Learn, & Remember

We don’t just “get over it” and go on as business as usual—we need an intervention.
Trauma-Informed Teaching requires having an awareness of our students’ past and present experiences and the effects of those experiences on students' well-being and their ability to engage with the materials and learn. We must be able to recognize trauma in ourselves and our students. We need to be intentional to promote safe environments that cultivates connectedness, empowerment, and recovery.

Calming the Nervous System
Trauma shatters our assumptions about the benevolence of the world, the meaningfulness of the world, and our sense of self and self worth.

Trauma is Relational

Healing Through Relationships

Interdependent Relationships with the Earth & its Inhabitants
Three preconditions for every student to thrive in life: feeling safe, experiencing meaningful connections, and having support & resources.
**Cultivate Community**
- Leverage Cultural Capital
- Reflect, Wonder, & Read Together
- Check-up on Each Other

**Identify Meaning**
- Re-affirm Goals & Purpose
- Identify the “Why” in Relation to Community
- Celebrate the Journey of Learning

**Care & Support**
- Center Wellbeing
- Pause to Reflect
- Why Must We Bear Witness?
- How to Transform Oppressive Systems?
- Cultivate Hope & Moral Imagination

**Reflect, Wonder, & Read Together**
- Ask “How Are You?”
- Provide & Normalize Mental Breaks
- Intentionally Engage in Positive Emotions

**Connections**
- Cultivate Community
- Identify Meaning

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“I live a hope despite my knowing better”

James Baldwin