A background image showing several hands of different skin tones reaching in from the edges and meeting in the center to form a circle. The hands are rendered in a semi-transparent, light gray style, creating a sense of unity and collaboration.

# Creating Spaces for Trauma-Informed Care in Higher Education

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SESSION 1: CREATING A COMMON LANGUAGE

# Questions to be addressed

---



What does it mean to be *trauma-informed* (TI)?



Why does being TI matter, especially during times of crisis?



What does being TI look like in higher education?



What are you already doing that's TI?



What can you do to become more TI?



What are some resources for becoming more TI?



What questions do you have?



Some terms  
you may have  
heard

Trauma-Informed

Trauma-Aware

Trauma-Sensitive

Trauma-Responsive

Compassionate Teaching

Compassionate Pedagogy

# Zoom Poll 1

What do you think of when you hear the term *trauma-informed*?

Select all that apply.

---

Asking students to share their trauma history

---

Acting as a friend or counselor to students

---

Avoiding teaching sensitive or difficult topics

---

Teaching mindfulness

---

Lowering standards

---

Coddling students

---

None of the above

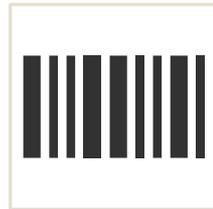
Being TI  
does not  
mean:



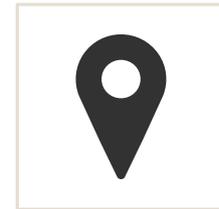
Being a superhero



Doing things the  
“right” way

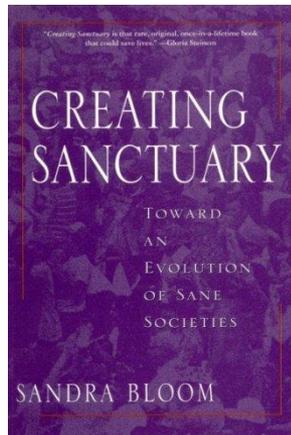
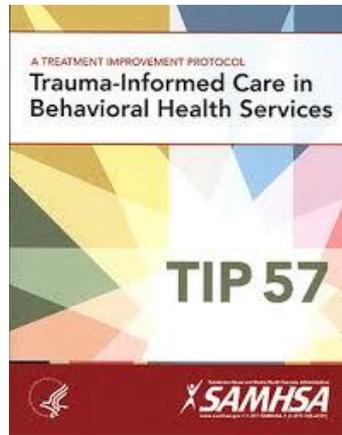
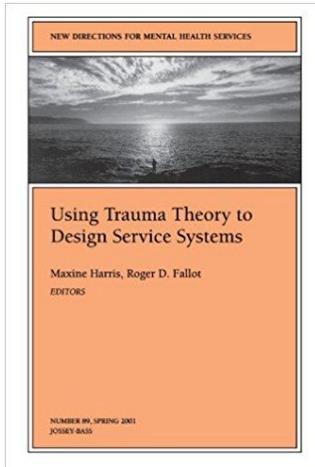


The same thing in  
all contexts

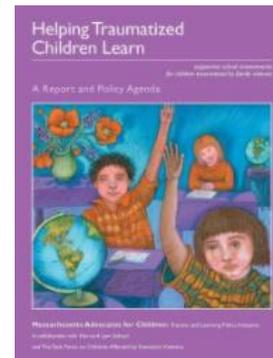


Reaching a  
destination

# Origins of TI Approaches

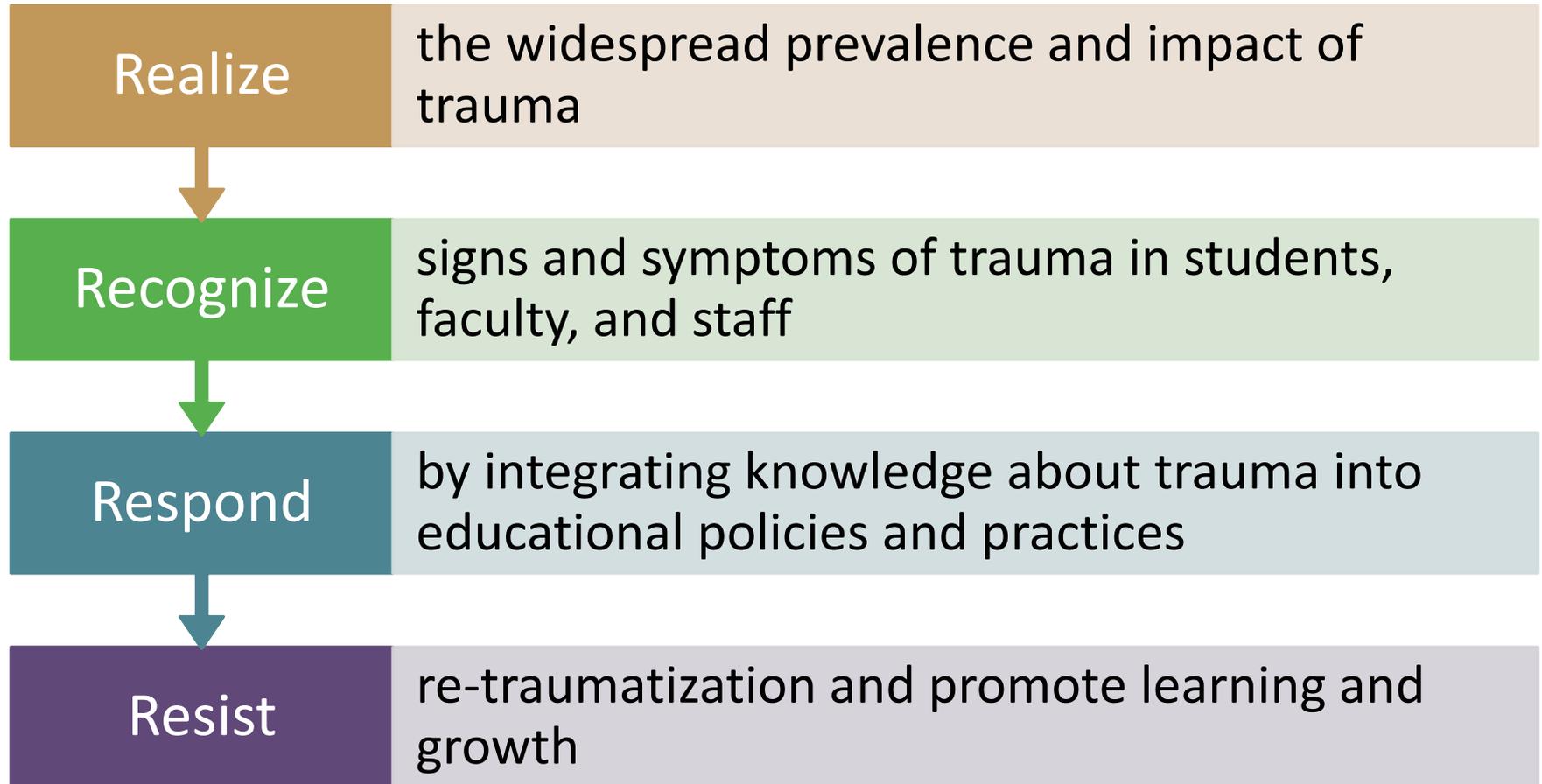


ACE Pyramid - CDC



# TI Approaches in higher education

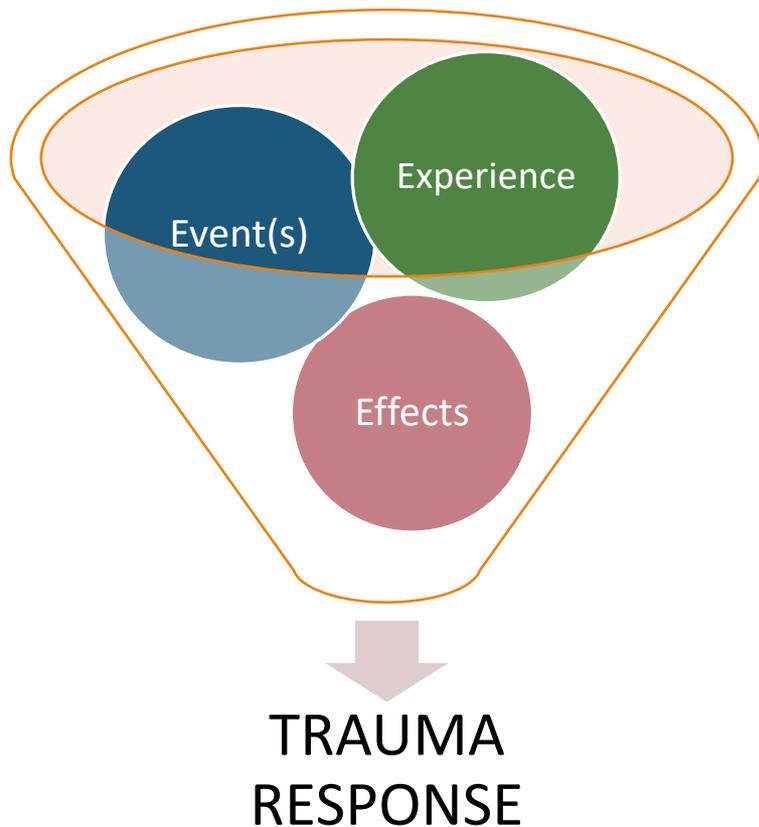
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(adapted from SAMHSA, 2014)

# Defining *trauma*

---



(SAMHSA, 2014)

“Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of **control, connection, and meaning.**”

(Herman, 1997)

# Types of trauma

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## Acute Trauma/ PTSD

- Short-term, unexpected event
- Examples: one-time rape, car accident, natural disaster

## Complex Trauma

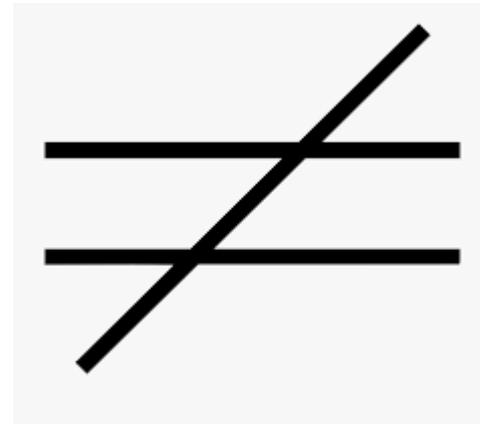
- Sustained, repeated ordeal stressors
- Examples: ongoing abuse, combat, DV, human trafficking, torture

## Continuous Traumatic Stress

- Ongoing, systemic oppression
- Examples: racial trauma, sexism, anti-Semitism, ableism, transphobia

Remember

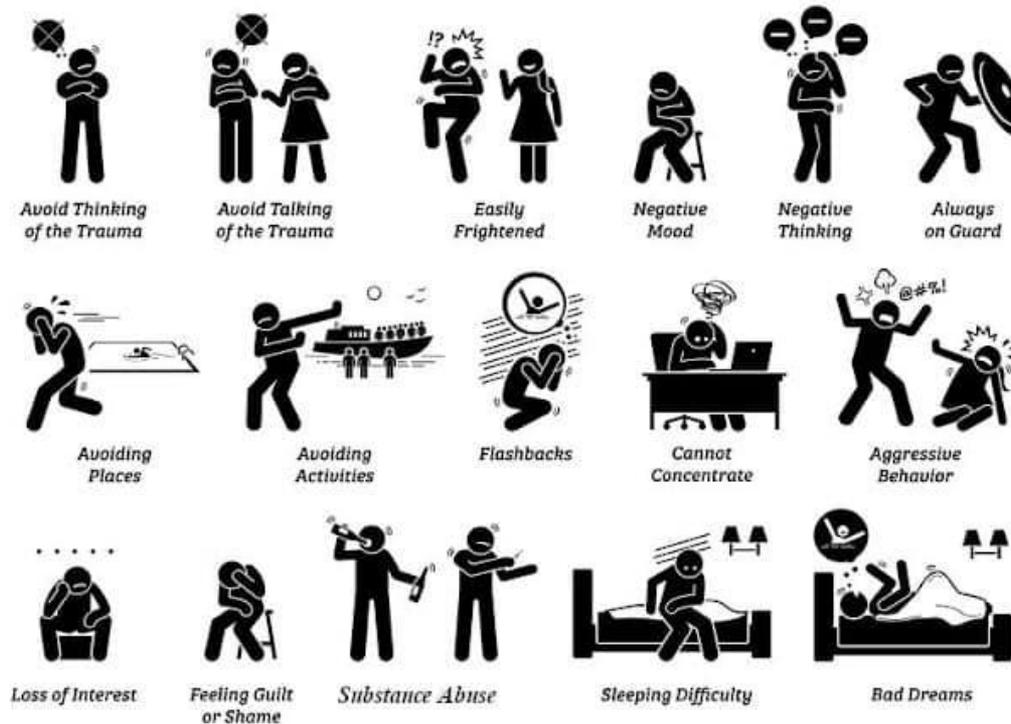
Trauma



Upset or  
Discomfort

# PTSD symptoms

## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)



# Complex PTSD symptoms

---

**Emotion Regulation:** persistent sadness, suicidality, anger

---

**Consciousness:** forgetting traumatic events, feeling detached

---

**Self-Perception:** helplessness, shame, guilt

---

**Distorted Perceptions of Perpetrator:** preoccupation with perpetrator or with revenge

---

**Relationships:** isolation, distrust, search for a rescuer

---

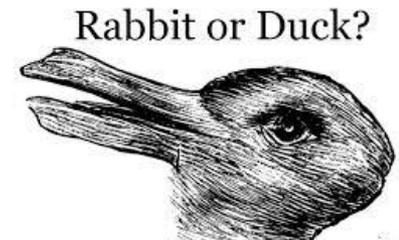
**System of Meaning:** loss of faith, sense of hopelessness or despair

---

# Limitations of a PTSD-oriented framework

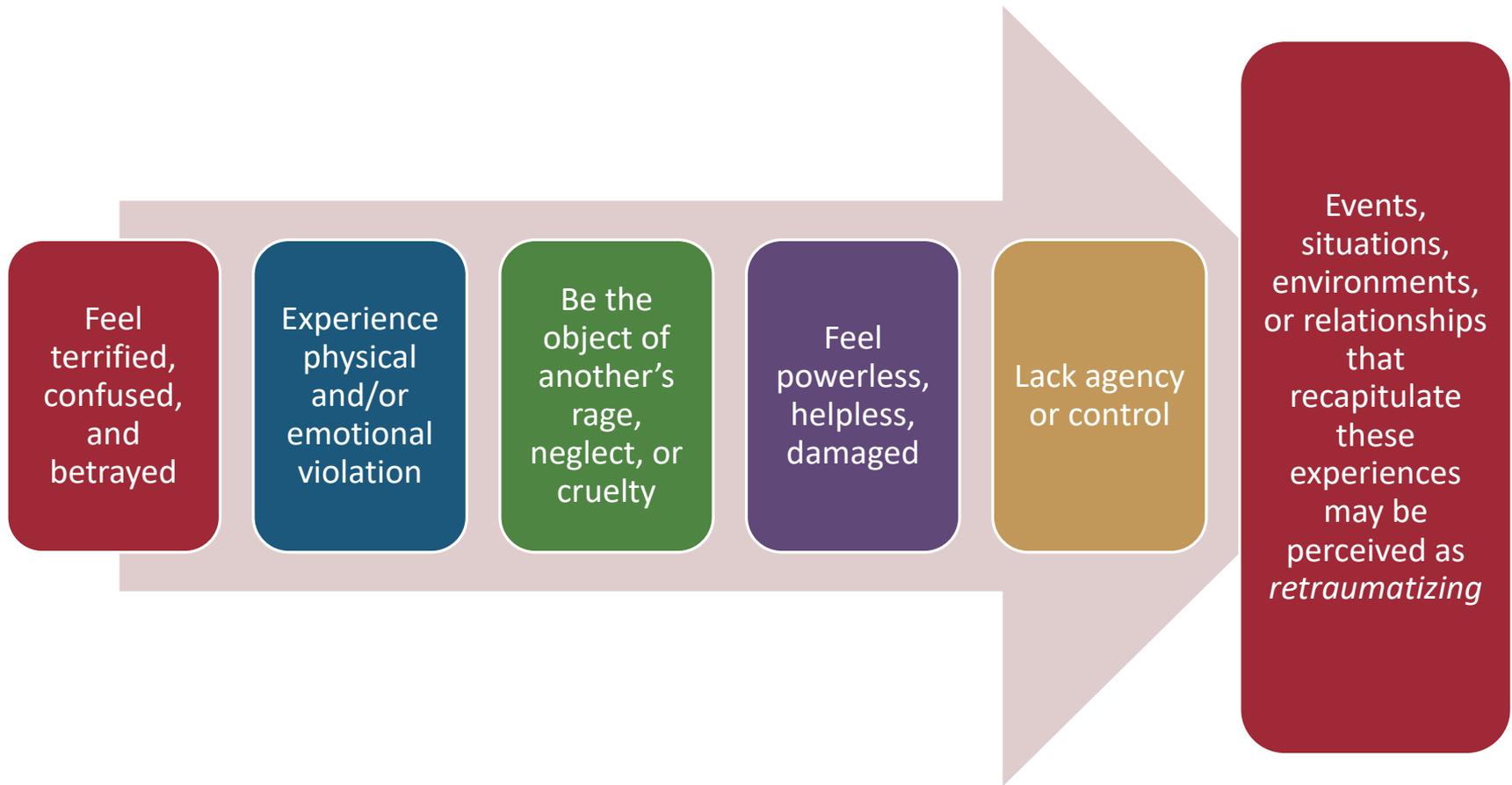
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- Overlooks non-immediately life-threatening events (e.g. child abuse, DV, chronic illness, combat, refugee status)
- Overlooks non-PTSD symptoms or responses (e.g. depression, anxiety, dissociation, substance abuse, self-harm, parenting difficulties)
- Overlooks policies and procedures that lead to symptoms
- Overlooks symptoms as attempts to cope



# To experience trauma is also to

---



## Characteristics of Abusive Relationships

(Harris & FalLOT, 2001)

- Betrayal occurs at the hands of a trusted caregiver or supporter
- Boundaries are violated & reimposed at the whim of the authority figure
- Secret information & relationships are maintained and even encouraged
- The voice of those less powerful is unheard, denied, or even invalidated
- Those in a subordinate position feel powerless to alter or leave the relationship
- Reality is reconstructed to represent values and beliefs of those in power
- Events are reinterpreted and renamed to protect those in power



# Resilience

---

The ability to recover quickly and return to the level of functioning that was present before an adverse experience occurred



# Stress-Related Growth

---

The perception or experience of benefitting from coping with a **stressful** event

Results in a higher level of functioning than one had prior to the **stressful** event



# Posttraumatic Growth

---

The perception or experience of benefitting from coping with a **traumatic** event

Results in a higher level of functioning than one had prior to the **traumatic** event

# SRG happens in response to non-traumatic situations and is not the same as PTG

(Kira et al, 2013)

## Type I Traumas

- Survival & secondary (indirect) traumas
- When a traumatic event happened once and stopped (e.g., car accident)
- Positively associated with PTG

## Type II Traumas

- Personal identity & attachment traumas
- When a traumatic event happened several times in the past and stopped (e.g., physical and sexual abuse)
- Not associated with PTG

## Type III Traumas

- Collective identity traumas
- When a traumatic event happened, continued to happen, and did not stop (e.g., discrimination and racism)
- Negatively associated with PTG



Why does  
being TI matter,  
especially  
during times of  
crisis?

---

# Trauma prevalence rates



(Frazier et al., 2009; Read et al., 2011)

[https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/common/common\\_adults.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/common/common_adults.asp)

# Risks of trauma exposure

---

## Direct

- PTSD
- Depression
- Substance abuse
- Adjustment problems
- Lower GPA
- Dropout

## Indirect

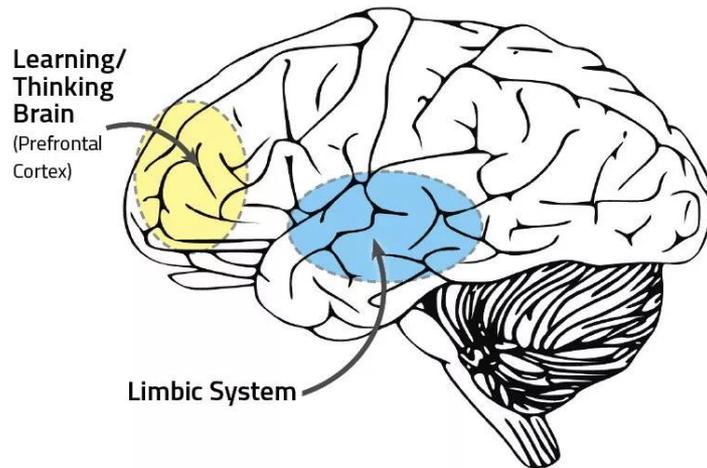
- Burnout
- Secondary traumatic stress
- Vicarious trauma

# Impact on learning and behavior

---

## **Survival Mode: Flight/Fight/Freeze**

Frontal lobe (Prefrontal cortex) goes offline  
Limbic system / mind and lower brain functions take over

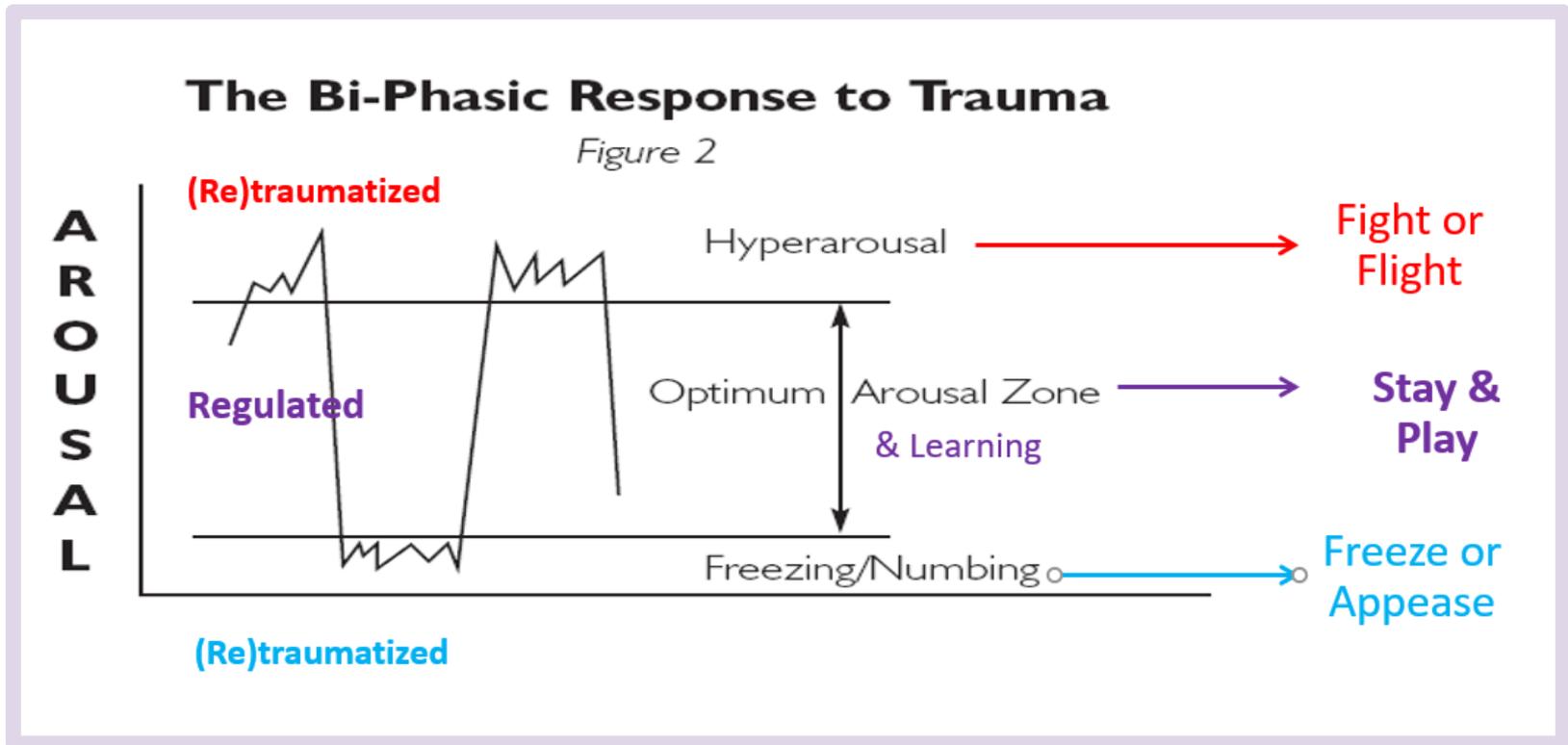


## Impaired

- Memory
- Speech
- Thinking
- Judgement
- Information processing

(Groner et al., n.d.)

# Impact on emotion regulation



# (Re)traumatization rates

## SIGNIFICANTLY DISTRESSING EXPERIENCE

| Current Role (n)      | Full Sample |       |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------|
|                       | Number      | %     |
| Prefer Not to Say (3) | 2           | 66.67 |
| PhD Students (12)     | 7           | 58.33 |
| MSW Students (103)    | 36          | 34.95 |
| Field Educators (49)  | 11          | 22.45 |
| Faculty (14)          | 3           | 21.43 |
| Staff (5)             | 1           | 20.00 |
| Total (186)           | 60          | 32.26 |

## Sources of (re)traumatization

|   | Number    | %             |
|---|-----------|---------------|
| <b><u>Experiences Within Program</u></b>  |           |               |
| Pedagogy/Policy                           | 10        | 23.26         |
| Field Work                                | 6         | 13.95         |
| Video/Lecture/Readings                    | 5         | 11.63         |
| Class Discussion                          | 3         | 6.98          |
| Field/GA Supervision                      | 3         | 6.98          |
| Workload                                  | 2         | 4.65          |
| Advisement                                | 2         | 4.65          |
| Student Death                             | 1         | 2.33          |
| <b><u>Experiences Outside Program</u></b> |           |               |
| Death/ Illness of Loved One               | 6         | 13.95         |
| Assault/Injury/Bullying                   | 4         | 9.30          |
| Client Death                              | 1         | 2.33          |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>43</b> | <b>100.00</b> |

(Carello, 2018)

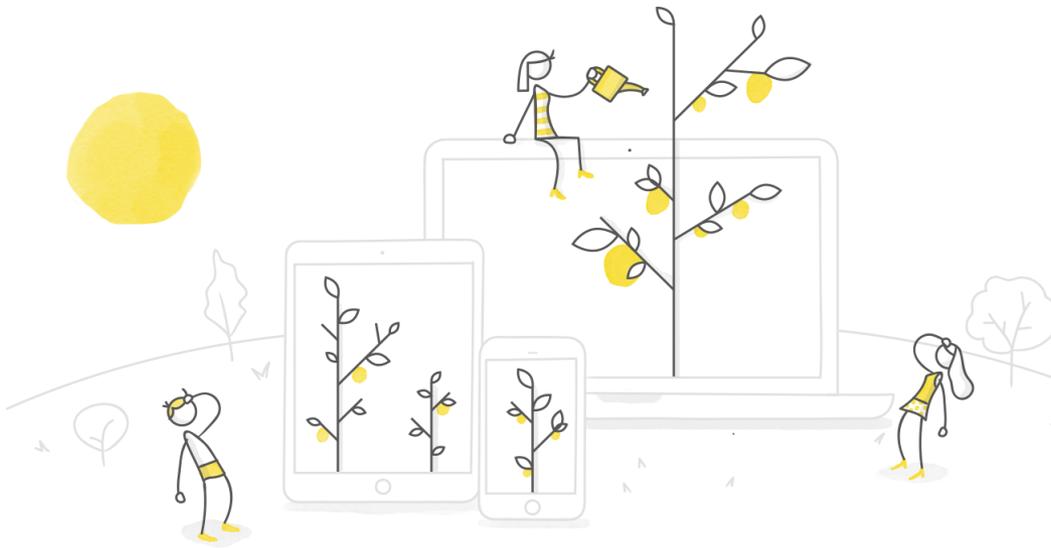


(Re)traumatization is often about conflict between educators & students

---

- Threatening
- Abusive
- Oppressive
- Neglectful
- Abandoning
- Unfair or disproportionate punishment

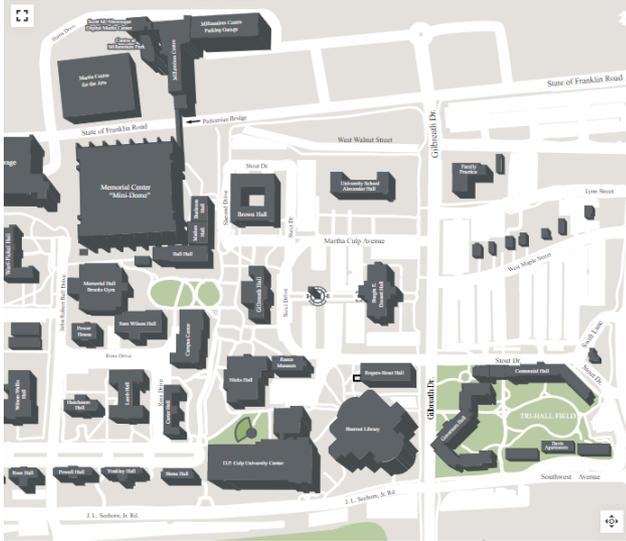




What  
does  
being TI  
look like?

---

# TICU



**EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

# TITL



# Trauma-Informed $\neq$ Trauma Specific

## Trauma-Informed



FAH2014340 [RF] © www.visualphotos.com

Understanding the effects of trauma on educators & students and practicing methods that promote resilience & prevent further harm

## Trauma-Specific



Treating specific symptoms or syndromes related to traumatic experiences

# Being TI means shifting our focus

---

INDIVIDUAL

~~What is *wrong*  
with you?~~

Trauma as disorder

INDIVIDUAL  
IN ENVIRONMENT

What has  
*happened* to you?

Trauma as injury  
or disability

# Being TI means making learning accessible

---



“Disability in and of itself is not a problem, but the environment in which we ask people with disabilities to function often is.”

# Being TI is a journey, not a destination

---

“Trauma-informed care is conceptualized as an organizational change process centered on principles intended to promote healing and reduce the risk of retraumatization for vulnerable individuals.”

## Trauma Aware

- Have become aware of how prevalent trauma is and have begun to consider that it might impact their clientele and their staff.

## Trauma Sensitive

- Have begun to:  
1) explore TIC principles; 2) build consensus around the principles; 3) consider the implications of adopting the principles; 4) prepare for change.

## Trauma Responsive

- Have begun to change their culture to highlight the role of trauma.
- At all levels, staff have begun re-thinking the organizational routines.

## Trauma-Informed

- Have made trauma-responsive practices the norm.
- Work with other partners to strengthen collaboration around being trauma informed.

# Being TI means applying trauma-informed principles

| Safety   | Trustworthiness & Transparency   | Support & Connection   | Collaboration & Mutuality   | Empowerment, Voice, & Choice  | Social Justice  | Resilience, Growth, & Change  |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| Creating an environment that respects and accepts all class members and helps them feel safe, including when they make mistakes. | Making course 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 forms of privilege and power and respecting one another's diverse experiences 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?

---

# Physical, Emotional, Social, & Academic 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:

- Allowing zoom participants to change screen name, use virtual background, or turn camera off during synchronous sessions
- Not requiring disclosure of personal trauma experiences
- Giving feedback to aid revision before final evaluation

# Trustworthiness & Transparency

---

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

Examples:

- Responding promptly to email
- Applying policies consistently
- Avoiding all-or-nothing or zero-tolerance policies
- Using evaluation rubrics

# Support & Connection

---

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

## Examples:

- Providing referral information for campus and community resources such as counseling, health, and tutoring services
- Announcing community events
- Inviting guest speakers
- Introducing people, groups, forums (e.g., listservs, social networks)

# Collaboration & Mutuality

---

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

## Examples:

- Developing community guidelines together
- Integrating self-evaluation
- Helping others identify and correct their own errors vs. correcting them

# Empowerment, Voice, & Choice

---

*How do you empower students and colleagues to make choices, advocate for themselves, and develop confidence and competence in their knowledge and skills?*

## Examples:

- Building in choices where possible (e.g. readings, topics, font, presentation mode)
- Allowing multiple attempts
- Making space for 1:1 conversations
- Soliciting questions, concerns, and complaints

# Social Justice

---

*How are you responsive to issues of privilege and power, and how do you acknowledge and respect students' and colleagues' diverse experiences and identities?*

## Examples:

- Asking for and using correct name and pronouns
- Addressing microaggressions
- Integrating content from diverse scholars and sources
- Creating spaces where people can speak using non-standard dialects and writing conventions

# Resilience, Growth, & Change

---

*How do you recognize students' and colleagues' strengths and resilience and provide feedback that helps everyone grow and change?*

## Examples:

- Pointing out what was done well or is improving
- Using language that recognizes improvement is possible (e.g. “Remember to ...”)
- Soliciting feedback to improve current course/service delivery as well as future course/service delivery



What can you do to become more TI?

---

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

# Prioritize Self-Care

---



Sleep, exercise,  
have fun



Set healthy boundaries,  
including reasonable  
work hours



Take breaks,  
including breaks  
from technology



Don't let the perfect be  
the enemy of the good



Connect with  
supportive family,  
friends, and  
colleagues



Ask for help

# Recognize Signs of Stress



You can't get out of bed or look for reasons to stay there all day.



You dread opening your email.



You think you will go insane unless people stop chewing so loud.



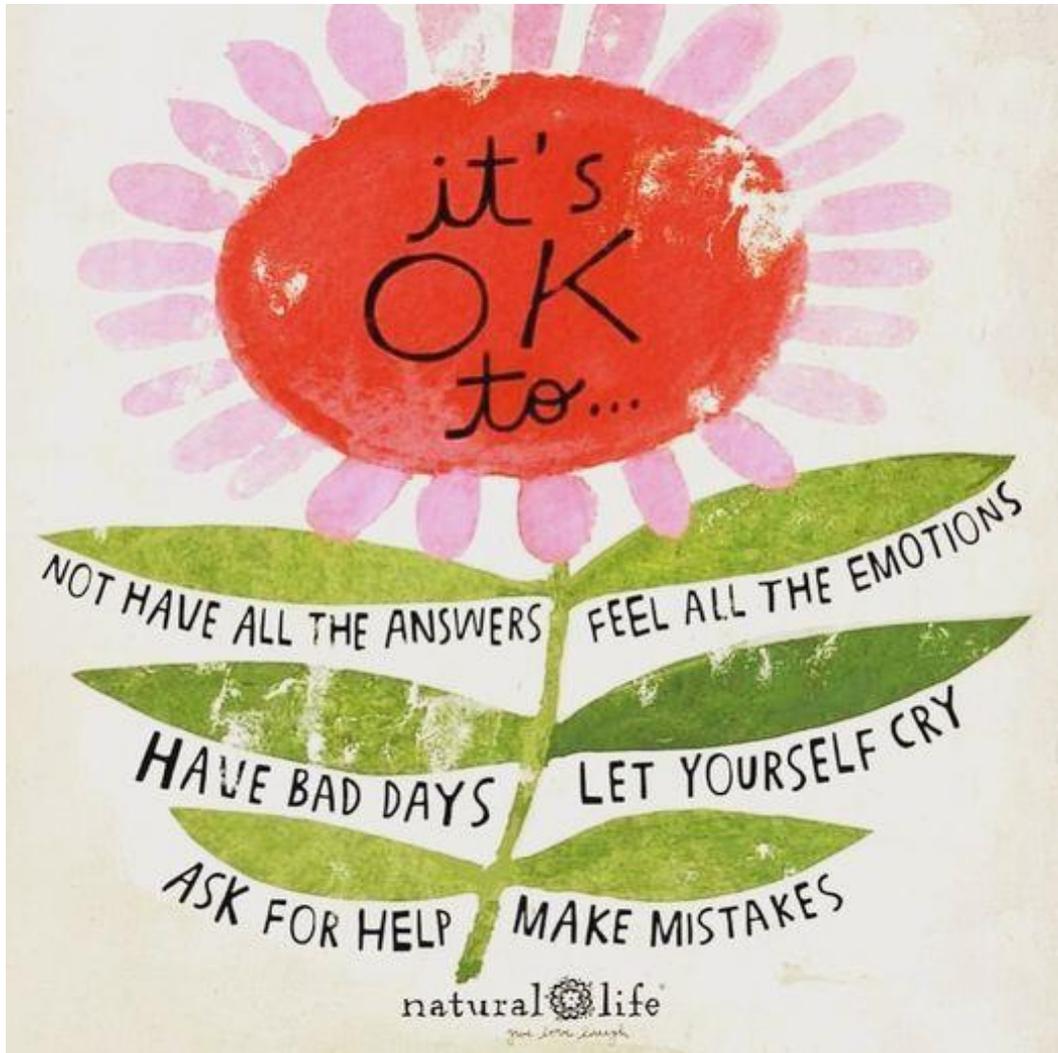
You consider caffeine a part of a balanced diet.



You always assume the worst.



You feel worse when you try to relax.



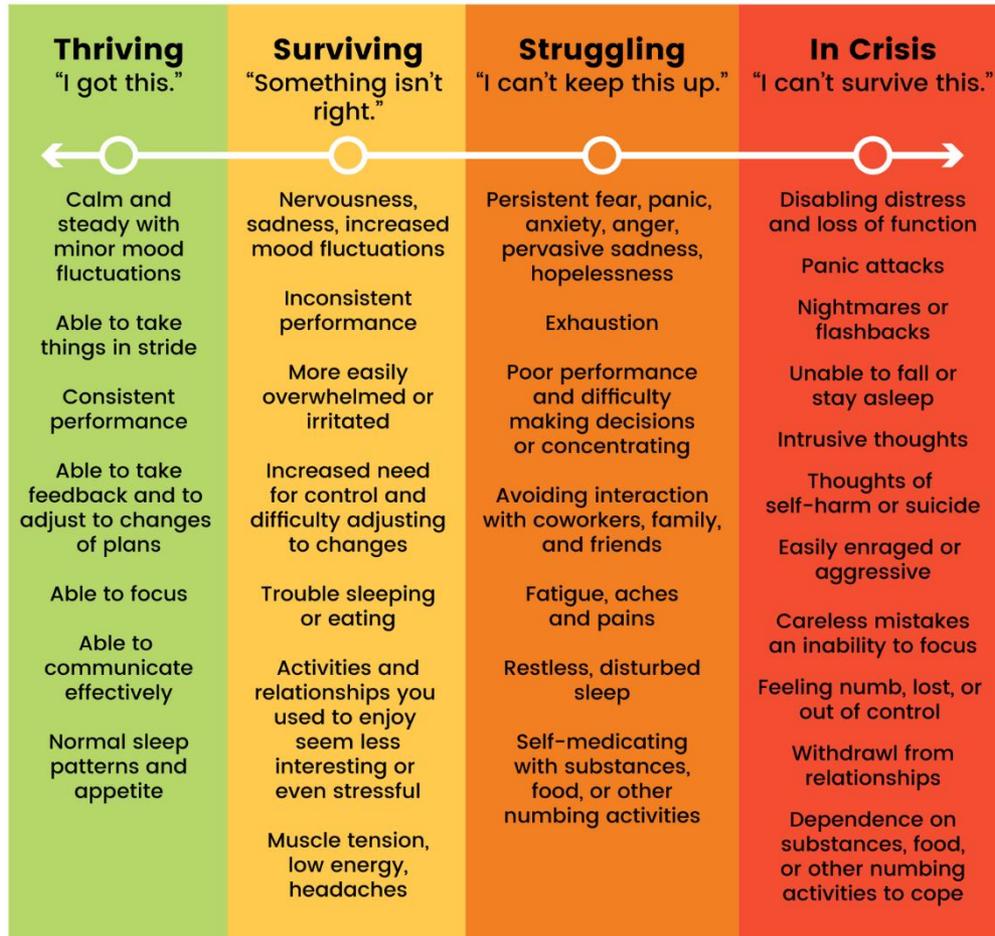
Chat box:

What are  
signs

**educators**

are stressed?

---



Chat box:

What are signs students are stressed?

---

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.

## Share Help- Seeking Resources

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

**Therapist Finder:** Psychology Today hosts a [therapy finder database](#) where you can find detailed listings of mental health professionals in your area.

**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.

# 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 forums



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

Be  
Flexible

# Foster Connection

---

Regular  
check-ins

Video/audio

Rituals

Social  
Forums

Small group  
activities

Interactive  
sessions



What are some resources for becoming more TI?

---



# 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](#)

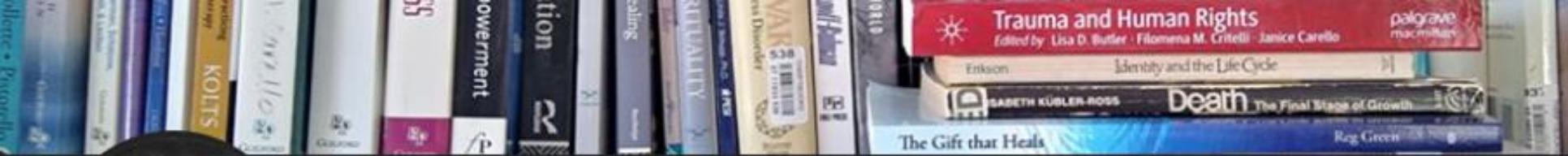
Due to the covid-19 crisis, I have been getting more inquiries about trauma-informed teaching in higher education. So I created a [video presentation](#) to provide both a general overview of trauma-informed teaching as well as some specific tips and strategies that can be adapted by college educators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

FOLLOW BLOG VIA EMAIL

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# Trauma-Informed Teaching & Learning

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## About

[See All](#)

A space to share thoughts, questions, suggestions, links, research, and resources related to trauma-informed teaching and learning.

1,053 people like this including 31 of your friends



Create Post



Photo/Video



Check in



Tag Friends



Trauma-Informed Teaching & Learning

9 hrs ·



[facebook.com/traumainformedteachers](https://facebook.com/traumainformedteachers)

# Books

---

- [\*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.)
- [\*Incorporating Diversity and Inclusion Into Trauma-Informed Social Work\*](#) by Laura Quiros
- [\*Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Education\*](#) by Alex Shevrin Venet
- [\*Connected Teaching\*](#) by Harriet Schwartz
- [\*What Happened to You?: Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing\*](#) by Oprah Winfrey & Bruce Perry
- [\*Trauma and Human Rights\*](#) by Butler, Critelli, Carello (Eds.)

# Self-Care

---

- [Self-Care Starter Kit](#)
- [Self-Care in the Digital Age](#)
- [Self-Care for Educators](#)

# Course Design & Web Accessibility

---

- [Quality Matters Rubric](#)
- [Web Accessibility Guidelines](#)

# Psychological First Aid

---

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

# Racial Equity

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- [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](#)

# K-12 and Other Resources

---

- [Adolescent Provider Toolkit—Trauma and Resilience](#)
- [Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative](#)
- [ACEs Connection Network](#)
- [ACEs in Higher Education](#)



# Coming Up Next

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- Q & A
- Session 1 Evaluation
- 10:30- 12:00 Session 2: Creating a Trauma-Informed Climate
  - Climate Assessment pp. 4-5



What  
questions  
do you  
have?

---



## **Let's connect!**

Email: [jcarello@edinboro.edu](mailto:jcarello@edinboro.edu)

Blog: [traumainformedteaching.blog](http://traumainformedteaching.blog)

FB: [@traumainformedteachers](https://www.facebook.com/traumainformedteachers)

Twitter: [@janicecarello](https://twitter.com/janicecarello)



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