

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

Creating Spaces for Trauma-Informed Care in Higher Education

SESSION 2: CREATING A TRAUMA-INFORMED
CLIMATE

Agenda

Reminder: Climate Self-Assessment pp. 4-5

Focusing Activity

Forecasting: Signs of Climate Problems

Storm Gear: Strategies for Preventing Climate Problems

Hurricane Weather: Crisis Management Strategies

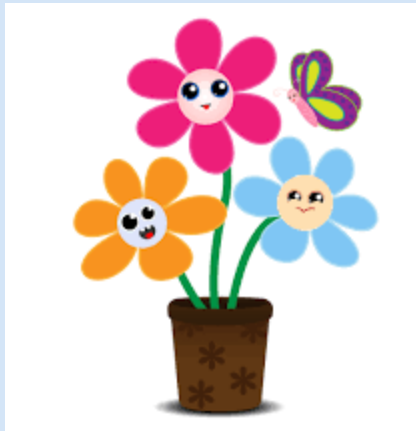
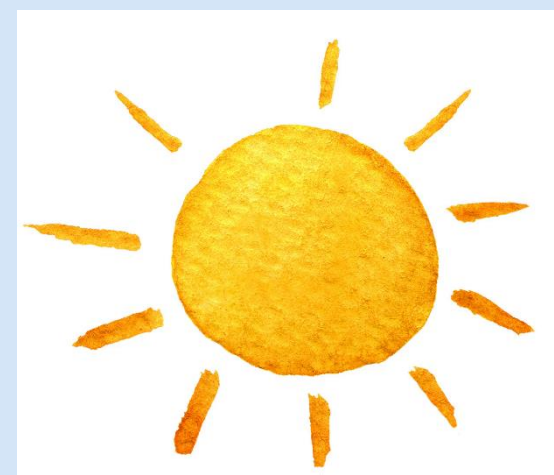
Weatherproofing: Additional Methods for Creating a Trauma-Informed Climate

Practice Makes Progress



Focusing Activity

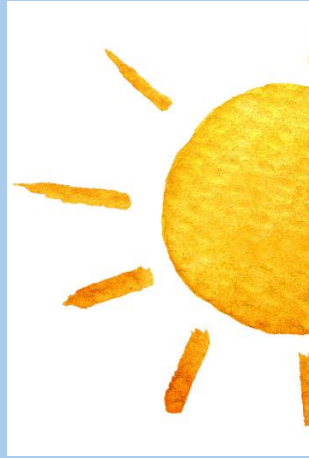
You're invited
to a party!



Please bring a dish
to pass!



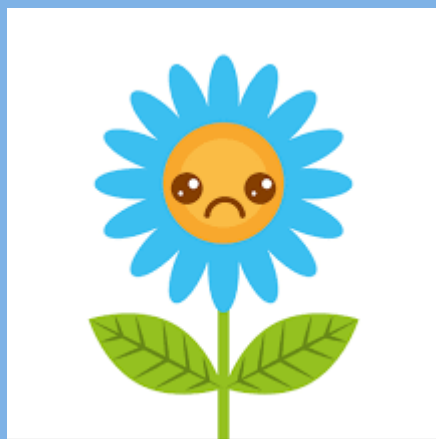
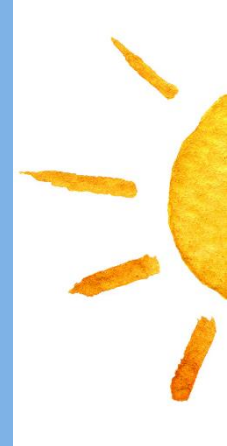
You RSVP'd
for this party!



So please don't be late
again or forget to bring
a yummy dish to pass!



You can come to the party if you want to.



If you do come,
could you bring a
dish to pass this
time?



Don't be late to this party!



The door is locked promptly at 7 pm and you will never be invited again if you don't bring a dish to pass.



How come you never
come to my parties
anymore?!



If you do come, you must bring a dish that serves at least 30 people. The dish must not be stored in plastic. Plastic will not be tolerated. Neither will nuts, sugar, dairy, gluten, meat, shellfish, food dyes, preservatives, or alcohol. You will be asked to leave if you bring any dishes without prior approval.



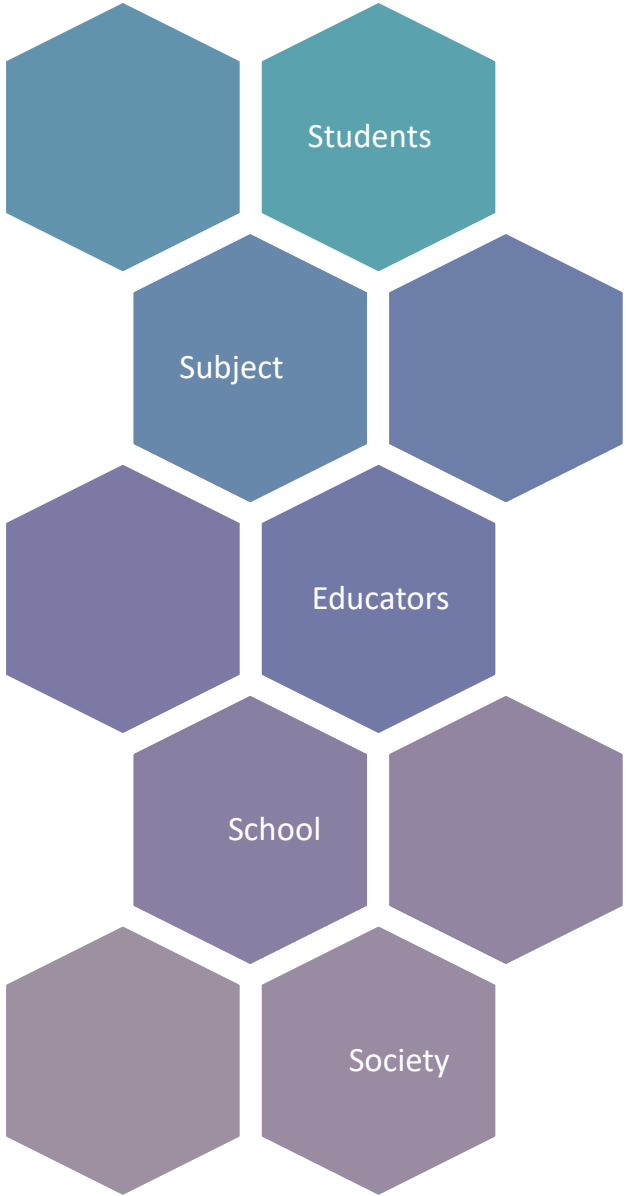
Becoming
trauma-informed
means changing
our culture &
climate

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.

Trauma-Informed Teaching & Learning Principles

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

Changing our culture and climate means changing how we relate and communicate



Stages of Emotional Growth

Emotional Slavery

- Feeling responsible for or burdened by others' feelings

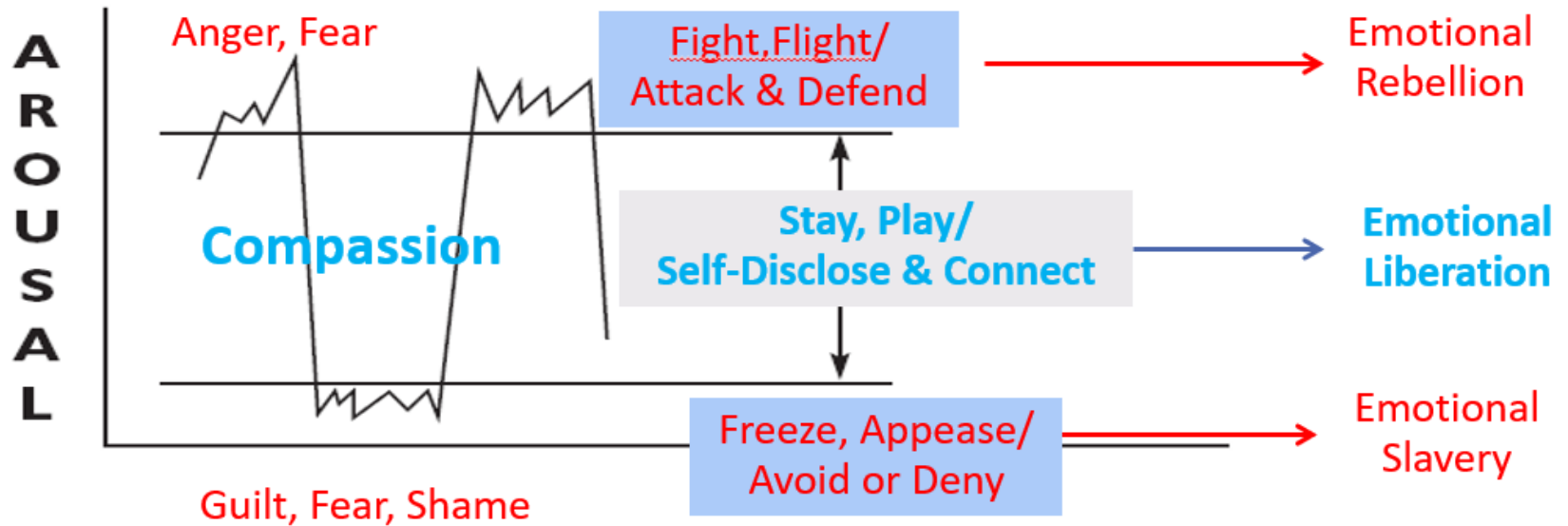
Emotional Rebellion

- Angry and not wanting to be responsible for others' feelings but unsure how to be responsible *to* others (vs. *for* others) in a way that is not enslaving

Emotional Liberation

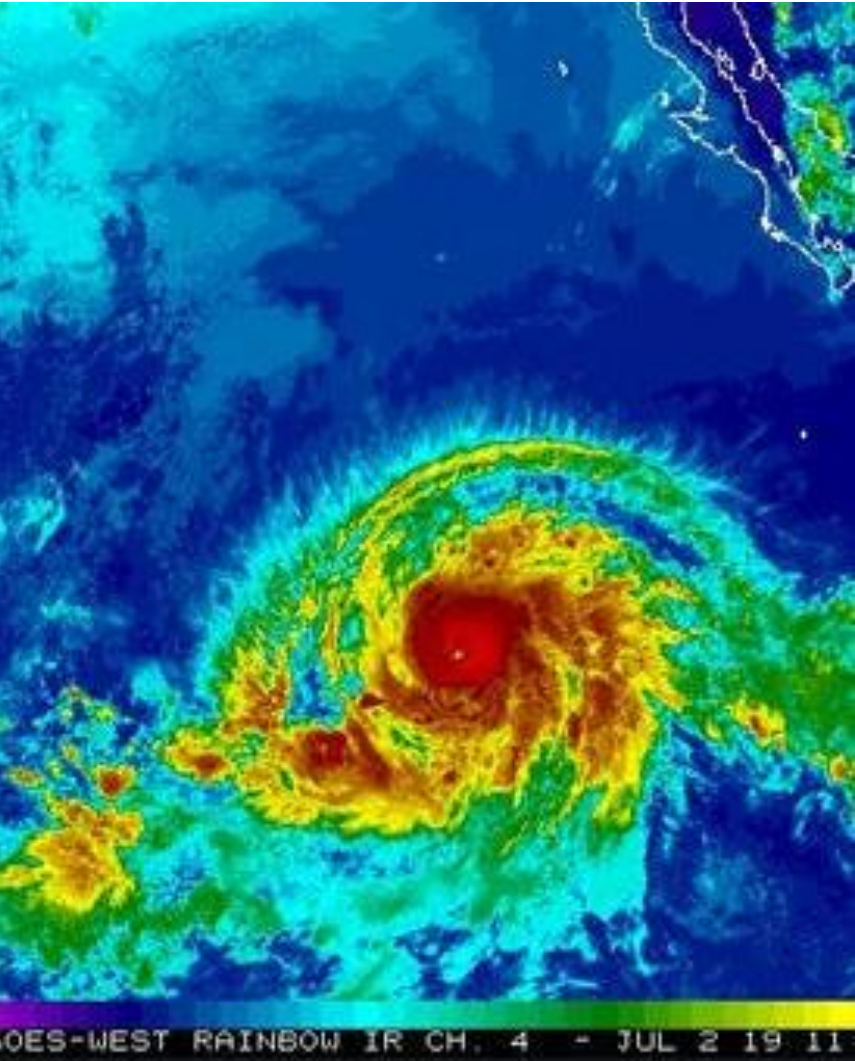
- Taking responsibility for our intentions and actions and responding to others' needs out of compassion rather than guilt, fear, or shame

The Bi-Phasic Response to Trauma



Emotional Regulation & Growth

(adapted from Rosenberg, 2003, 2005; Schupp, 2004)



Forecasting: Signs of Climate Problems

Create a Shared Culture



Facilitate Career Advancement

Manage Conflict



Perception Becomes Reality

Respond and Engage



Provide Positive Feedback

Develop Colleague Maps



The Sound Relationship Workplace

Gottman Institute Sound Relationship Research



Warning Signs

Harsh Startups

The Four Horsemen

Flooding

Failed Repair Attempts



Harsh Startups

Starting a conversation negatively:

- Attacking
- Blaming
- Accusing
- Using one of the “four horsemen”

Harsh Startup Examples

STUDENTS

- “Can we get out early?”
- “Why can’t you make an exception?! You’re going to make me lose my scholarship!”
- ?

FACULTY/STAFF

- “You’re late. Again.”
- “Why would you think I can make an exception? Does this look like high school?”
- ?

The Four Horsemen

Criticism: attacking character; focuses on identity not behavior (e.g. “What’s wrong with you?”; “Why can’t you do this right?”)

Contempt: ridiculing; treating as lesser than (e.g. eye-rolling, sarcasm, ‘splaining, hyper-correction; “Yes, but...”)

Defensiveness: positioning self as victim; making excuses; cross-complaining (e.g. “How could you say that?”; “If you hadn’t...”)

Stonewalling: avoiding conflict; withdrawing; shutting down; (e.g. not responding; one-word responses: “Whatever”)

The Four Horsemen Examples

STUDENTS

- Not responding to email.
- “If you didn’t assign ridiculous amounts of work I might submit it on time.”
- “Whatever.”



FACULTY/STAFF

- Not responding to email.
- “You think writing the paper is hard, try grading all of them!”
- “I don’t know how/why you got into this class/school/program.”
- ?



Flooding

- Physical and emotional distress: fight/flight or freeze/appease mode
- Feelings of indignation: “I shouldn’t have to put up with this.”
- Feelings of victimhood: “Why is everyone always picking on me?”
- Hard to make or hear repair attempts when flooded

Flooding Examples

STUDENTS

- Silence during class discussion
- Walking out of class
- “Why are you making us do this busywork?”
- ?

FACULTY/STAFF

- Avoiding discussion of some topics
- Walking out of meetings/
Ending early
- “Calm down!”
- ?

Failed Repair Attempts



- Inability to de-escalate tension
- Inability to hear repair attempts
- Inability to make or accept apology or amends
- Repetitive cycle of recrimination or defensiveness

Failed Repair Attempts Examples

STUDENTS

- “Yes, but...”
- “I did what the prof said, but I still got a bad grade.”
- Negative course evaluations
- Four horsemen
- ?

FACULTY/STAFF

- “Yes, but...”
- “I changed the policy, but I still get complaints.”
- Triangulation
- Four horsemen
- ?



Storm Gear: Strategies for Preventing Climate Problems



Four Horsemen Antidotes

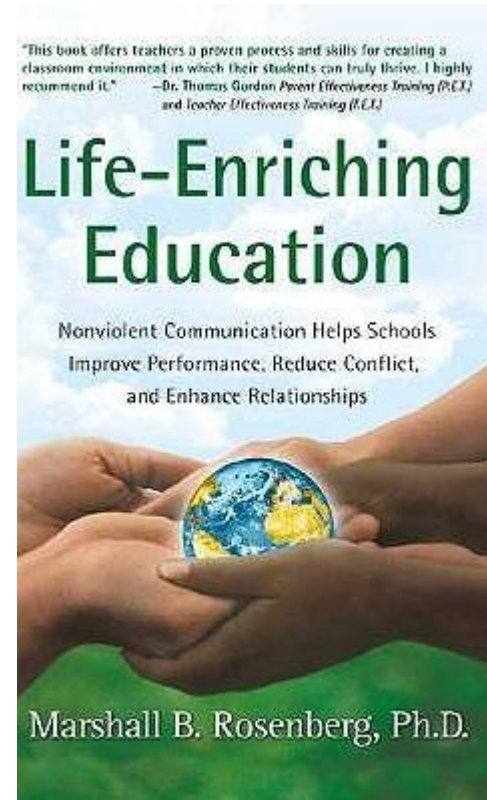
Criticism: Soft Start-Ups:
Use “I” statements; express a positive need

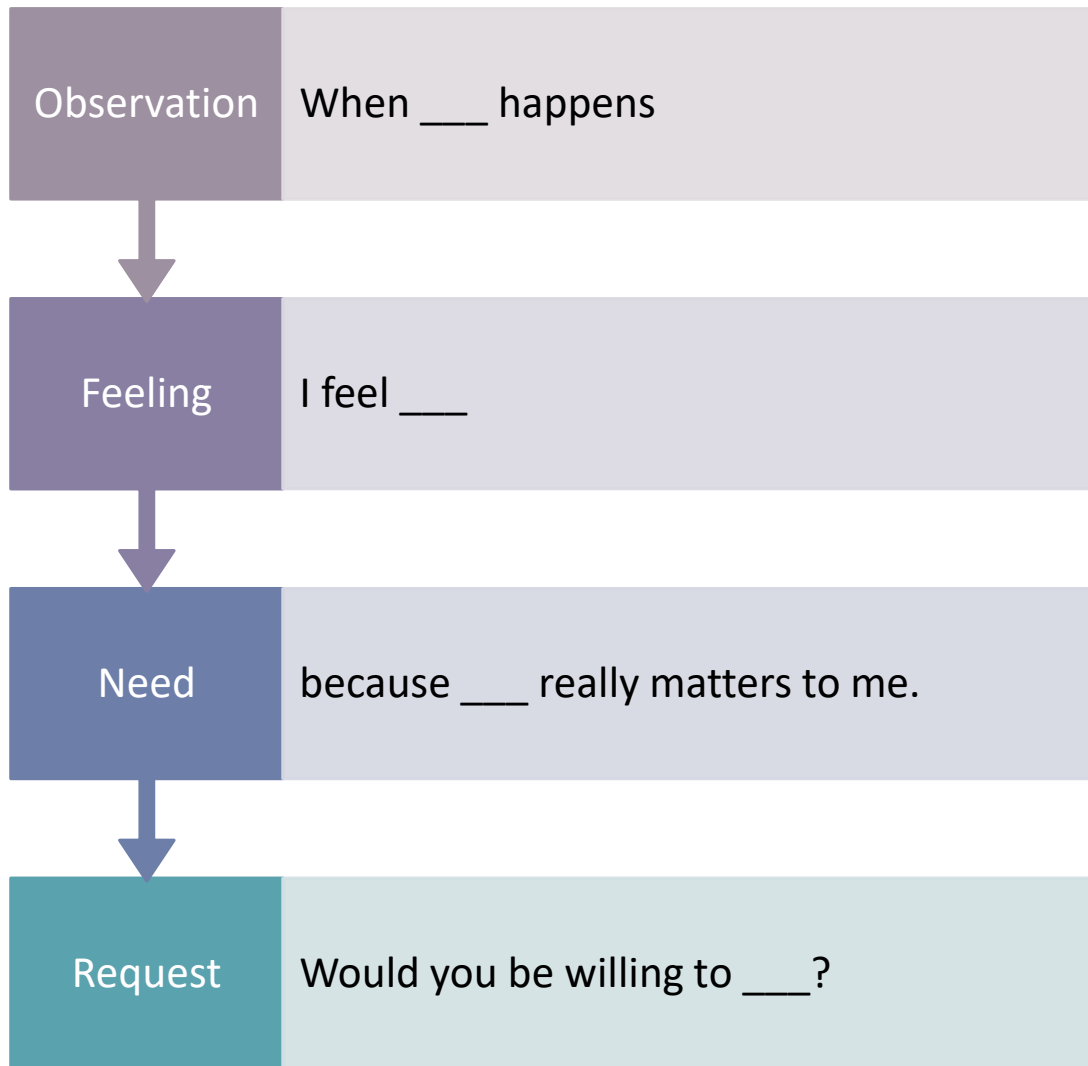
Contempt: Culture of Appreciation:
Pay attention to positive qualities and strengths

Defensiveness: Responsibility Taking:
Accept another perspective; apologize for mistakes

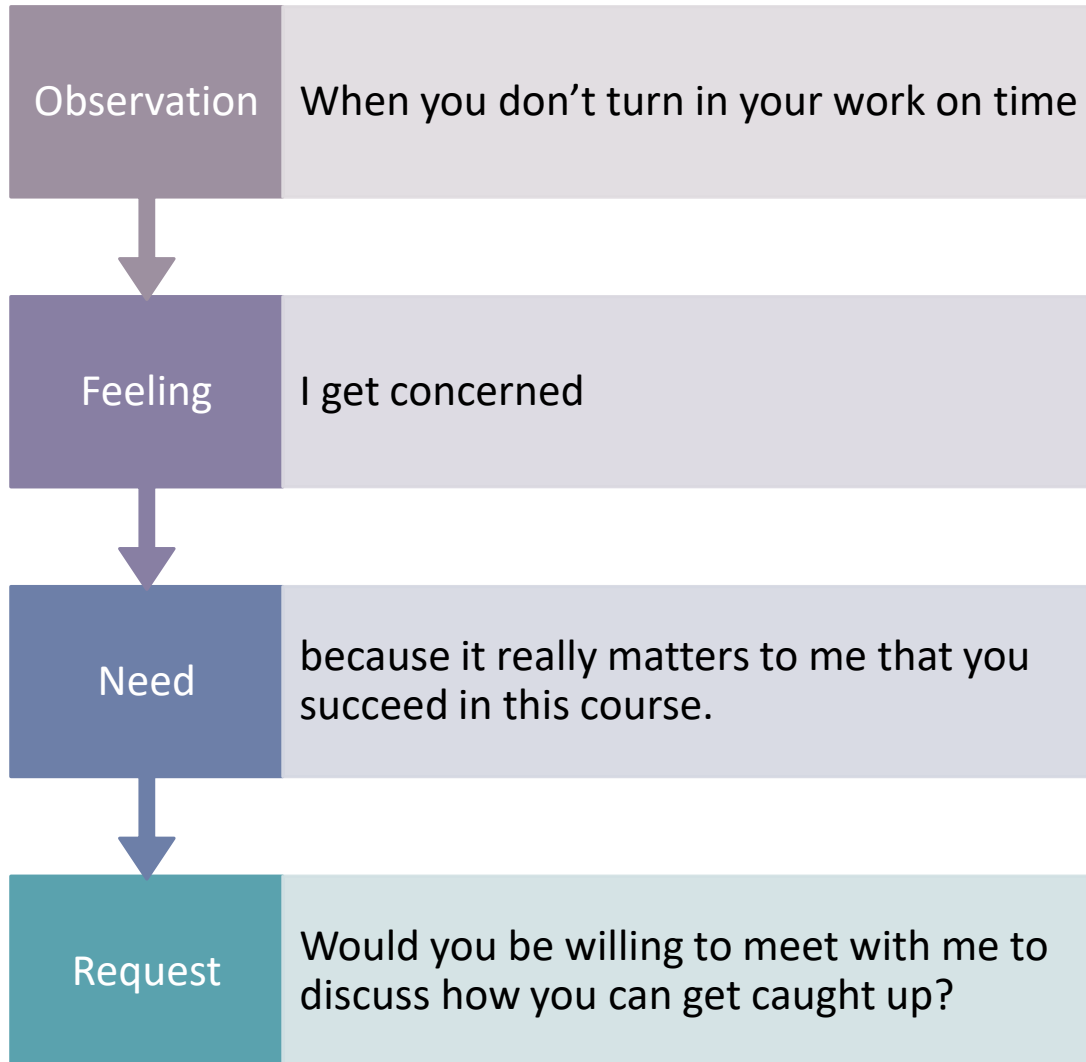
Stonewalling: Self-Soothing:
Take a break and then come back; calm yourself; practice self-care

Marshall Rosenberg Nonviolent Communication (NVC)





NVC Process



Example:
Making a
Request



Example:
Showing
Appreciation
(leave out request)

“I” Statements

JUDGMENT

1. You made me mad
2. We need to talk
3. You ignored the directions
4. This doesn't make sense
5. You're wrong

OBSERVATION

1. I felt angry
2. I would like to talk
3. I don't see the required elements
4. ?
5. ?

Demands vs Requests

DEMANDS

- Emphasizes obedience
- Must comply or rebel
- Implies wrongdoing if do not comply
- Discouraging

REQUESTS

- Emphasizes compassion
- Shows empathy for others' needs
- Takes responsibility for own needs
- Empowering

Expressing Needs



Leave out “you”



Be positive



Be specific



State what to do vs
what not to do



Give concrete examples

“You must cite properly.”

“I need to see all of the references cited in APA to assign a passing grade.”

“Don’t turn in the paper late.”

“To assign full credit, I need the paper submitted by the due date.”

“Fix your citations.”

?

Advice vs Feedback

ADVICE

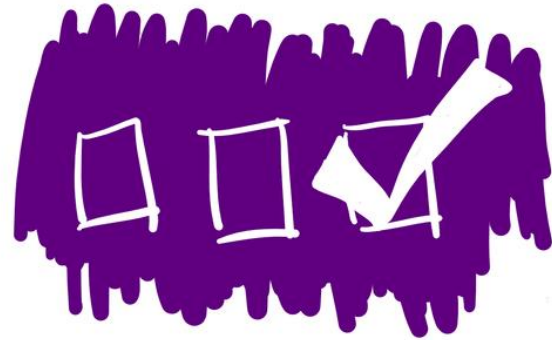
An opinion or suggestion for what to do.



- “You should have cited at least three sources.”
- “You should visit a tutor.”

FEEDBACK

Information about progress toward a goal:



- “You have not yet cited the required number of sources.”
- “Tutoring services are available, if you’re interested.”

Chat box/Raise hand

A student confides they've been out of school for many years and don't feel confident they can earn good grades and finish their degree.

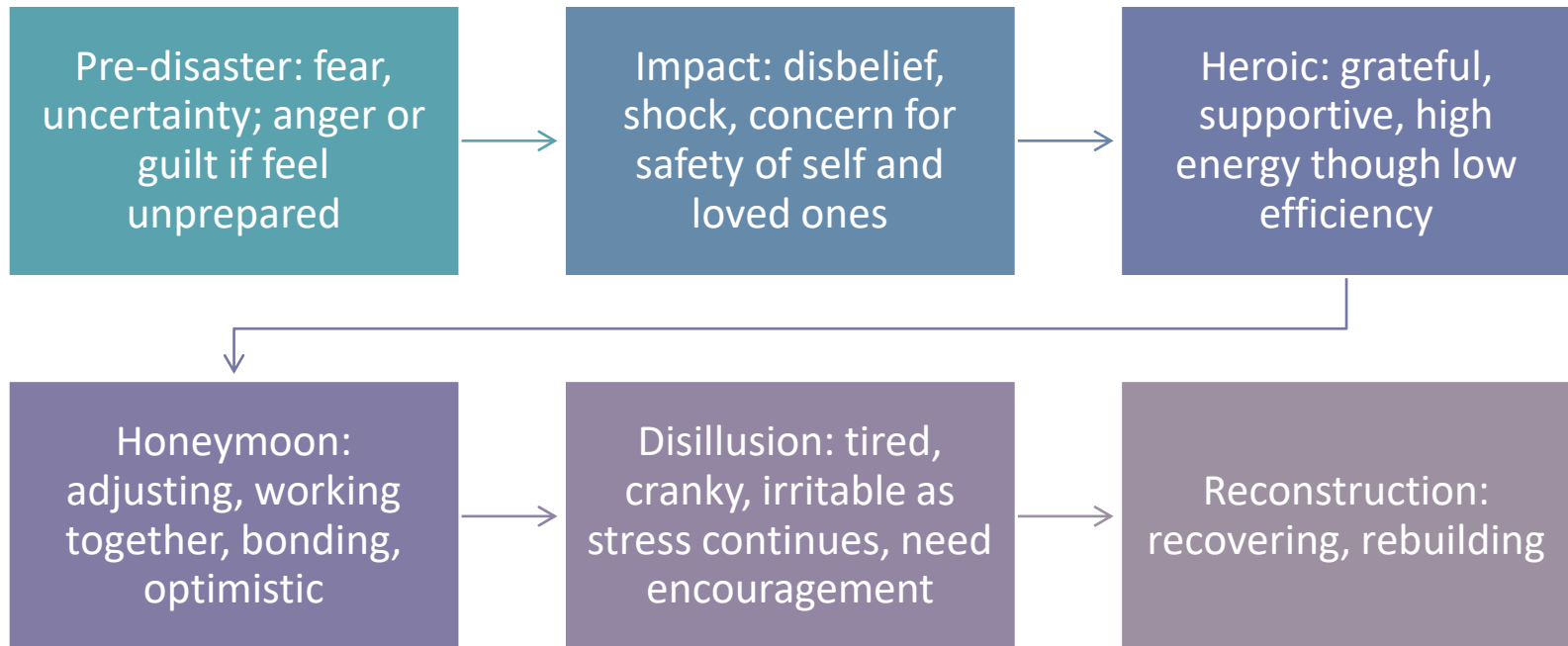
Give ADVICE

Give FEEDBACK



Hurricane Weather: Crisis Management Strategies

Typical stages as a disaster unfolds





Tips for Managing Crisis in the Classroom

- Be specific in telling students what has been done to ensure their safety.
- Provide accurate information regarding the event and dispel rumors.
- Respond to questions honestly and admit when you don't know the answer.
- Respond with acceptance to the feelings students express.
- Explain that a variety of reactions are typical.
- Adapt activities that might be affected by stress, e.g., tests and presentations.
- Do not press students to describe or relive an event.
- If event-related readings or discussions would be appropriate for your class, permit students to opt out or provide an alternative.
- Plan discussions with an emphasis on an intellectual understanding of the event rather than sharing of emotional reactions or unpleasant memories.

Use Positive Self-Talk: Thoughts like, “I can handle this” will typically have a more helpful impact on your own feelings and behavior than “I can’t deal with this.”

Focus on Feelings: People sometimes have a hard time naming their feelings. Saying something like, “That sounds scary” or “Tell me what that feels like” does not mean you agree with their perception but demonstrates that you understand and empathize with what’s happening to them.

Avoid Power Struggles: Challenging or exercising authority over a person can escalate negative behaviors. Bring their focus back to working together to solve the problem at hand. “What do you think might be the next best step?”

Set Limits: Offer respectful choices and consequences. Be clear, speak simply, and offer the positive choice first. “Would you like to put on your mask or leave the building?”

Recognize Personal Limits: Sometimes the most helpful thing to do is to let someone else handle the problem. “Who can help with this?” “What referral can I make?”

De-escalation Tips

(Dufresne, 2003)



Weatherproofing: Additional Methods for Creating a Trauma-Informed Climate

Greeting People with a Smile



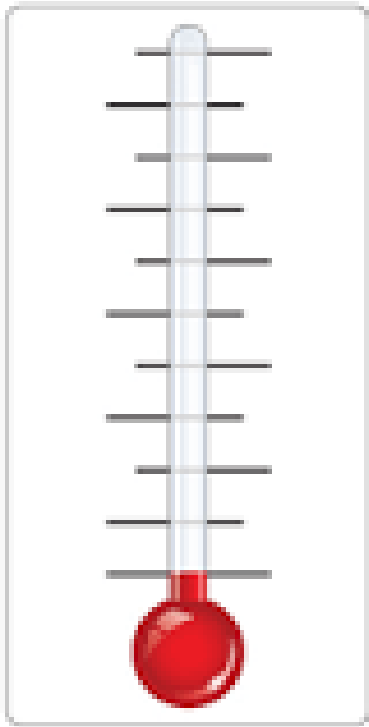
(Trauma-Informed Oregon, 2020)

Connection Rituals

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0
BA
MD
PhD

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...

Validating

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.

Responding 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...”

- How might you respond?
- Might your response differ depending on your role/relationship with the student?

Zoom Poll 2.1

Which of the following responses have you made or heard others make?

Select all that apply.

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

Zoom Poll 2.2

Which of the following demonstrate empathizing with the student?

Select all that apply.

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

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

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

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.”



Practice
makes
~~perfect~~
PROGRESS

A student shares they have major anxiety and struggle with live or recorded presentations.

Which are more TI responses?

1. Exempt student from all presentations
2. Tell the student they will get a failing grade if they don't do the presentation
3. Tell student about your struggles with anxiety and how you overcame them
4. Ask the student what you can do as their teacher to help support their participation
5. Create flexible pathways for all students to participate (e.g., practice sessions, camera off, showing slides vs face, adjusting privacy settings, modeling imperfection)
6. Other responses?

A student confides they are thinking about quitting school because of the stress due to the pandemic.

Which are more TI responses?

1. Reassure the student that you will pass them no matter what
2. Meet with the student regularly to discuss their ongoing personal struggles
3. Tell the student they should consult a counselor
4. Brainstorm alternative ways for the student to meet the course objectives
5. Create flexible pathways for all students to meet the course objectives (e.g., flexible late work policies, pass/fail grading)
6. Other responses?

A student makes an inappropriate comment in an online forum.

Which are more TI responses?

1. Ignore it.
2. Delete the post and email the individual student to say inappropriate comments like that are not permitted.
3. Reply to the post: “It sounds like you don’t yet understand the impact of this kind of comment. What are others’ thoughts?”
4. Reply to the post: “Comments like this are very common, and when they come up it can be a great opportunity for learning. Let’s talk about how this relates to what we’ve been studying.”
5. Contact forum participants: “I just wanted to check in with you about the comment that was posted. Talking about issues like this can be difficult for some. How are you doing?”
6. Other responses?

A student sends a very long email in which they share a lot of details about a very difficult personal issue and requests an assignment extension.

Which are more TI responses?

1. Tell the student you will grant the extension and ignore the rest of the email
2. Grant the extension and respond in depth to all of the details the student has shared
3. Thank the student for letting you know what's going on and grant the extension
4. Let the student know you cannot grant the extension and point to other ways the student can be successful in the course
5. Empathize with the student and remind them about the flexible late work policies
6. Remind the student about contact info for help-seeking resources in the syllabus
7. Other responses?

A student shares privately that they are nervous about the upcoming discussion of readings on military sexual assault due to personal experience.

Which are more TI responses?

1. Tell the student they should come to class or it will count as an unexcused absence
2. Tell the student to skip class that day
3. Let the student know that you trust they will do what they need to do to take care of themselves before, during, and after the discussion
4. Remind all students prior to class discussions to use the restroom and take breaks as needed and
5. Check in with any students who have not been in contact who left during the discussion and did not return
6. Remind all students about contact info for help-seeking resources in the syllabus before discussions of sensitive topics
7. Other responses?

A student confides they want to get out of a violent relationship and are coming to school to do something different with their life, but they are worried about their personal safety in and out of the classroom.



**More TI
Responses?**



**Less TI
Responses?**

A couple of students are very eager to participate in class discussions, so much so that other students have started to participate less.



**More TI
Responses?**



**Less TI
Responses?**

A student complains that an instructor is giving them bad grades because they have different political views than the instructor.

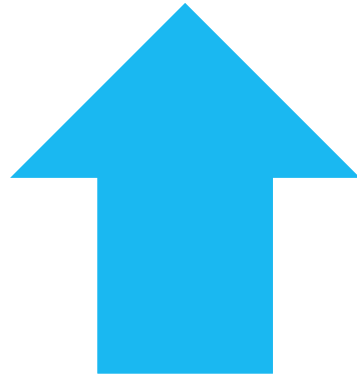


More TI Responses?



Less TI Responses?

On Wednesday
there is a
national
disaster. On
Thursday you
are scheduled
to teach/work.

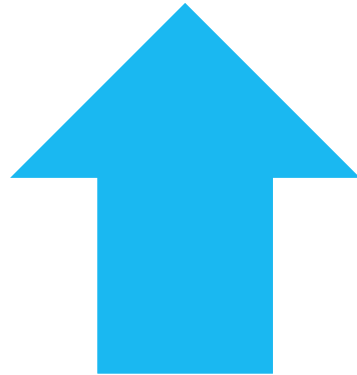


More TI
Responses?

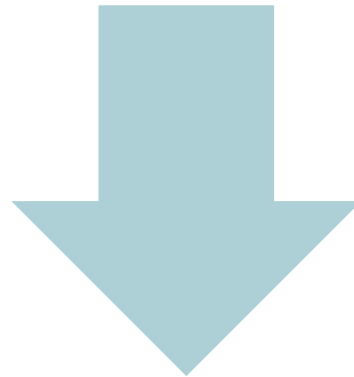


Less TI
Responses?

Describe a
scenario



More TI
Responses?



Less TI
Responses?



Moving Forward

Which new strategy will you try?

You're invited
to a party!



Please bring a dish
to pass!



Coming Up Next

- Q & A
- Session 2 Evaluation
- 1:00- 2:30 Session 3: Creating Trauma-Informed Learning Environments
 - Breakout sessions

Questions or comments?





Let's connect!

Email: jcarello@edinboro.edu

Blog: traumainformedteaching.blog

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

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



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