Trauma - informed Approaches in Virtual Settings

A closer look at “Trauma - Informed Principles for Online Teaching and Learning Spaces” tool & discussion on revisioning practices in a post - COVID era.
Khyra Lammers
Teen Program Specialist
Amy Ballard
Adult Educator
Casey Chanton
Social Worker & Trainer
Drexel Center for Nonviolence & Social Justice
Sanaz Hojreh
Consultant in Arts, Arts Education, & Youth Development
Agenda

❖ How to Use the tool: Tinyurl.com/Trauma informedOnline

❖ Trauma - informed Principles with a Communication Lens

❖ What’s Next?: Healing - Centered Approach
Exercises to keep us present
Let’s take 3 Deep Breaths together

#DESTRESSMONDAY

Tip:
Try to loosen tension in your body with each exhale.
Checking In

On a scale of 1 to 5...

What is your level of “Zoom Fatigue” today?
Checking In

On a scale of 1 to 5…

How present do you feel in this moment?
Checking In

What can you do to be more present do you feel in this moment?
Our Story
Defining Trauma - Informed Approach

“Trauma” vs. “trauma”

Trauma is an overwhelming or scary life experience that exceeds coping resources.

Trauma - Informed Approach
We (educators, practitioners, etc.) realize trauma is widespread and it is possible that individuals we know have experienced trauma, we recognize signs of trauma in the people around us and respond by integrating what we know about trauma into appropriate policies and practices while resisting the use of policies and practices that can retraumatize.
Using the Tool: “Trauma-informed Principles for Online Teaching and Learning Spaces”
The Principles

SAFETY
Creating spaces where people feel culturally, emotionally, and physically safe

TRUSTWORTHINESS
Providing full and accurate information about what’s happening and what’s likely to happen next

CHOICE AND CONTROL
Individuals are treated with dignity and have choice & control over how they participate

COLLABORATION
Sharing power with learners & helping learners build relationships with each other

EMPOWERMENT
Building on learners’ strengths

CULTURAL HUMILITY & RESPONSIVENESS
Recognize differences in how specific social and cultural groups may experience, react to and recover from trauma; Connect learners to support and resources that meet their unique social and cultural needs
Each Practice is Tagged

What Helps People Feel Culturally, Emotionally, and Physically Safe Online?

**Question about Safety Principle**

**Practice**

- Respect the time frame. Communicate if you are going to go over time.

**Associated tags**

- Put emergency phone numbers and resources in the chat as a regular practice, naming that people may not be safe at home. Tell participants: “If you need to leave the call immediately, please do.”

- Respect what the beginning about what safety means (not just physical safety). “What does it look like for you to feel safe/ not feel safe?”
Applying the Tool: “Trauma-informed Principles for Online Teaching and Learning Spaces”
We want to hear from you!

In response to the 6 principles above, the collaborative authors responded to questions about how to apply these principles for adult participants in online workspaces and virtual program facilitation, including classrooms, therapy groups, and more. On the following pages, you will find their collective ideas.

This is a growing and changing collaborative document; the authors would like to welcome additional ideas! If you would like to share other ideas, please click here.

Our goal is to continue updating and sharing this document in order to build on our collective knowledge and keep the practices relevant.
Let’s share!

- What resonated with you the most? How did you see yourself in the document?

- What was new for you/what was your a-ha moment?

- What would you add to the document?

- What feels like a stretch? (“I don’t buy it” or “I don’t know where to start to do this”)
Communicating Change in Hard Times

How can we apply trauma-informed principles to communication within our institutions?
Foundation of Safety & Trust

For communication about change to be trauma-informed, people need a foundation of some safety and trust in the institution/its leadership.

- Where do the decisions about change take place?
- Who is included/excluded?
- Do people feel trusted to make decisions?
- Do people feel affirmed/recognized for their contributions?
- Is there a history of openness/transparency around decisions and changes?
- Does leadership communicate directly?
- Do they have good boundaries?
- Do leaders respond to constructive feedback?
- Do people see them make timely changes in response?
There is an extensive body of literature on change management. Not all of it is trauma-informed.

**Structured change management process that includes collaborative input**

Carefully crafted rollout of communication/learning/follow up to provide **consistency, predictability**. Train the messengers, tailor to different audiences, repeated & varied messaging on multiple channels

**Transparency** in inclusion in process, intent, vision- “Why, how, what’s in it for me?”

**Empowerment and affirmation** - Trust people to make decisions about things that affect their work. Affirm people’s experience & expertise

Space for multidirectional feedback, ongoing reinforcement and learning, peer support

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*Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) 2019, Trauma-Informed Leadership for Organisational Change: A Framework, TICPOT Stage 4, MHCC, NSW, Australia, Authors: Corinne Henderson C and Isobel S.*
Communicating Change In Uncertain Times

Are we, the communicators, taking space for self care? Getting supportive supervision? Accessing peer support at work?

After decisions are messaged, how are we creating space for meaningful feedback? How can we create safety here? Zoom listening circles, etc.

After we make a revision based on people’s feedback, how do we message that so people can see it?

Sometimes a decision needs to be made quickly/cohesively by leadership. Sometimes process has to be confidential.

As we communicate what was decided, are we being transparent about the process and intent of that decision to the fullest extent possible?

How can we create structure, consistency, and predictability in communication?

When there is NO news to share - check in consistently with what we do know and the timeline. “We haven’t forgotten you!”

When there is HARD news to share

Where am I emotionally?

Am I avoiding real conversations? I.e. should this be a phone convo instead of an email?

How can we make space for socially distanced mutual/peer support around this news?

Sometimes a decision needs to be made quickly/cohesively by leadership. Sometimes process has to be confidential.
Let’s share!

- As information has been communicated in your institution, what has seemed to work? What hasn’t?

- What steps can you take to make sure information & change is communicated in a trauma-informed manner?

- How can we communicate with our colleagues/students/peers in a trauma-informed way?
Healing - Centered Engagement

Moving Beyond Trauma - Informed
Six Guiding Principles
To a Trauma-Informed Approach
“I am more than what happened to me. I am not just my trauma.”

- Student
Moving beyond “what happened to you?”

to “what is right with you?”

- Dr. Shawn Ginwright
Healing - Centered Engagement

- Political, rather than clinical
- Culturally grounded and views healing as the restoration of identity
- Asset driven and focuses on well-being we want, rather than symptoms we want to suppress
- Supports adult providers with their own healing
TRAUMA INDUCING  TO  TRAUMA REDUCING

Trauma-Reactive
- Fragmented
- Reactive
- No felt safety
- Overwhelmed
- Fear driven
- Rigid
- Numb

Trauma-Informed
- Understanding trauma & stress
- Resists re-traumatizing
- Recognizes socio-cultural trauma
- Realizes widespread impact
- Responds by shifting practice
- Cultural humility & equity
- Resilience & recovery
- Safety & sustainability

Healing Centered
- Equitable & inclusive
- Integrated & collaborative
- Reflective
- Asset-based
- Relationship-centered
- Growth & prevention-oriented
- Flexible & adaptable

Adapted from Trauma Transformed https://traumatransformed.org/communities-of-practice/trauma-informed-systems-tis/
Q&A