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FLO FRIDAY- Teaching with a Trauma-Informed Lens

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Since time immemorial, the səliiwətaʔt təməx^w (Tsleil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh-ulh Temíxw (Squamish), x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), WSÁNEĆ (Saanich), and the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations of the Lək^wəŋən (Lekwungen) Peoples have walked gently on the unceded territories where we are grateful to live, work, and play. We are committed to building relationships with the first peoples here, based in honour and respect, and we thank them for their hospitality.

Territorial Acknowledgment and Introductions



Session Contents



- What is trauma?
- Approaches to trauma-informed teaching
- Self-care



What is trauma?



Definition

Trauma is the lasting emotional response that often results from living through a distressing event.

-Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

Examples of Traumatic Events

- Unexpected death of a loved one
- Pregnancy loss
- Experiencing or witnessing violence or a serious accident
- Life-threatening illness/injury/hospitalization
- Natural disaster and climate change (e.g., wildfire, flood, earthquake, heat dome)
- Pandemic
- War (e.g., Afghanistan)
- ACES—adverse childhood events



Colonization

- Residential schools
- Sixties Scoop
- Distrust of government structures
- Police brutality/harassment of Indigenous people
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
- Continuing institutionalized racism



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



What Can Trauma Look Like in the Postsecondary Classroom?

- Difficulty focusing and remembering information
- Not handing in work
- Chronic absenteeism
- Emotional outbursts
- Fear of taking risks
- Anxiety about public speaking, group work, exams, deadlines
- Isolation and withdrawal

-Hoch et al, 2015



Simple things we
can do in the
classroom



Trauma informed approaches are beneficial for **EVERYONE**

- Similar to universal design for learning
- Doesn't single out people who "need help" or work from a deficit model
- Promotes a safe, secure environment for everyone—especially important for trauma survivors, but benefits ALL students

So...how do we do this???

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1QBATQgawAlzrG_AZTW68KqPXoy3THz8_eHCjViRxEcw/edit?usp=sharing



Create warmth through language

From Harnish et al, 2011:

- Use positive or friendly language
 - Include humour (relevant, brief, non-hostile)
 - Show compassion
 - Use some self-disclosure (e.g. “When I was a student, I found study groups helpful.”)
 - Show enthusiasm
-
- Use trauma-sensitive language



Help students connect with you and others

- Make time for personal introductions
- Provide opportunities for small group or pair discussions in class (just having a friend in class)
- Use a syllabus format that expresses
 1. purpose and details of assignments
 2. encouragement and explicit belief in students
 3. overview of support and how to get help(Harrington & Thomas, 2018)



Communicate expectations and boundaries clearly

- Trauma can cause people to fear the unknown and experience stress with uncertainty.
- You can reduce stress by communicating clear limits and expectations--this creates structure and trust.



Practice empathy

- Avoid making negative assumptions about students' motivations.
- It's good to have firm boundaries but enforce them with kindness and compassion.
- Consider giving students a heads-up when you are going to tackle potentially sensitive subjects.
- Your goal is not to make students feel good, but to feel understood (Meyers et al., 2019)



Self-Care

Go to www.menti.com and use this code 58 18 55 2

<https://www.mentimeter.com/s/7b21516ba7c90e8ce1e9eefac7be59ae/e074e958b050>



Self-Care

- Compassion Fatigue
 - The cost of caring, constant strain of caring for or supporting others can lessen our ability to feel compassion and empathy.
- Burnout
 - Occurs when the work environment is unsupportive and demanding; the erosion of energy and reduced motivation
- Gender-Based Expectations
- Cultural-Based Expectations
- Be mindful about your own health and stress levels (Goodfellow Unit, 2017)



- Not a luxury (Stipp & Miller, n.d.)
- Give ourselves what we give our students – empathy, humour, compassion (Stipp & Miller, n.d.)
- Setting clear boundaries and communicating those to others – syllabus, office hours
- Seek out counselling before you're in crisis
- Find a friend or two
- Teaching philosophy



Self Care

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Self-Care



- Grading – checklists and rubrics, ungrading, one success and one improvement feedback
- Go outside
- Exercise, meditation
- Eat well
- Be selective about what you engage with – no emails after 9pm or a news fast
- Take actual time off – a weekend, a day, an evening

THANK YOU

- Melinda Worfolk, worfolkm@cnc.bc.ca
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Join us for:

FLO – Trauma-Informed Teaching
September 19th to October 1st

Register through BCcampus



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Thank you everyone!



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