Approaches to Trauma-Informed Teaching and Learning

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Preparing ourselves for learning

Pay attention.

How is your body feeling right now?

How is your mind feeling right now?

Now, breathe.
### Learning outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explain</th>
<th>the relationship between trauma and learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give</td>
<td>examples of recommendations for how to use trauma-informed approaches in your interactions with students in order to promote their well-being</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage</td>
<td>in dialogue with colleagues about how the current health crisis and recent examples of racial injustice may be shaping your teaching</td>
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</table>
Guidelines for Participation

- Use of participation tools (chat, raise hand function, etc.)
- Co-creating a safe learning environment with our peers
- Session is being recorded
- This does not replace medical or mental health advice for you, nor are you expected to provide such advice to your students
Brief contextualization with Ignatian principles

Presentation on what trauma is, what it means for our teaching and how it impacts learning

Breakout rooms

Larger group discussion
Setting the Stage: Cura Personalis
Setting the Stage: Cura Personalis

Cura Personalis

- Friends
- School
- Work
- Family
- Health
- Spirituality
- Future plans
- Mental health
What is trauma?

“Trauma can be defined as any experience in which a person’s internal resources are not adequate to cope with external stressors” (Hoch, Stewart, Webb, & Wyandt-Hiebert, 2015, as cited in Davidson & Northwest, 2017, p. 4)

Direct or vicarious experience of real or possible threats of harm or death through exposure to (a) the frailty of the human body or (b) the existence of evil. (Paraphrased from Dr. James Garbarino, LUC Department of Psychology)
COVID-19 and Racism

Both COVID-19 and racism and racialized violence are two current overarching stressors for students, though others exist.
Effects of COVID-19

- Destabilizes life
- Threatens self and loved ones
- Forces continual uncertainty
- Creates a dysfunctional learning environment
Effects of Racism

- Negative physical effects
- Negative mental effects
- Persistent anxiety and worry on college campuses
Physical\(^1\)

- Coronary artery calcification\(^2\)
- High diastolic blood pressure \(^3\)
- Lower-birth-weight infants\(^4\)
- Cognitive impairment\(^5\)
- Subjective and objective indicators of poor sleep\(^6\)
- Higher levels of visceral fat\(^7\)
- Higher mortality rates\(^8\)*

Mental

- Correlation between perceived racial/ethnic discrimination and depression, ADHD, oppositional defiant disorder, and conduct disorder in younger students\(^9\)
- Racial battle fatigue\(^10\)

*All Cited in D. Williams & Mohammed, 2013

2. Lewis et al., 2006
3. Lewis et al., 2009
4. Earnshaw et al., 2013
5. Lewis et al., 2012
6. Lewis et al., 2011
7. Barnes et al., 2012
8. Barnes et al., 2008
9. Coker et al., 2009
10. Smith et al., 2007
How Trauma Impacts Learning

Survival Mode: Flight/Fight/Freeze
Frontal lobe (Prefrontal cortex) goes offline
Limbic system / mind and lower brain functions take over

Principles for Trauma Informed Teaching & Learning

• Physical, emotional, social, and academic safety
• Trustworthiness and transparency
• Support and connection
• Empowerment, voice, choice

Adapted from Carello & Butler, 2015; Fallot & Harris, 2009; SAMHSA, 2014; St. Andrews, 2013
## Educators’ scope of practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>empathy</td>
<td>counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trauma-informed, anti-racist, apply DEI principles</td>
<td>ignores equity concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognize the probability of trauma in your classroom</td>
<td>try to assess individual trauma histories</td>
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<tr>
<td>develop self-awareness</td>
<td>overly focused on behaviors of others</td>
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<tr>
<td>curious about impact of trauma on pedagogy</td>
<td>rigidity or overreliance on what worked for you as a learner</td>
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Knowing Possible Signs in Our Students

- Difficulty focusing, attending, retaining, and recalling
- Tendency to miss a lot of classes
- Challenges with emotional regulation
- Fear of taking risks
- Anxiety about deadlines, exams, group work, or public speaking
- Anger, helplessness, or dissociation when stressed
- Withdrawal and isolation
- Involvement in unhealthy relationships or coping strategies

(Hoch et al., 2015, in Davidson & Northwest, 2017, p. 8)
Examples & Discussion

You will be dismissed into small breakout rooms.

Even numbered groups will discuss prompt 1, odd numbered groups will discuss prompt 2.

You will then have a representative report back to the larger group for a larger debrief.
Discussion Prompts

• **Discussion Prompt #1**: Current events reveal video footage of another person of color killed by police or vigilantes in the US. Your student has not turned in her recent assignments. What is your trauma-informed response?

• **Discussion Prompt #2**: How will you revise or evolve your syllabus to be responsive to the realities and resulting traumas related to the COVID-19 pandemic, health inequities, social unrest and systemic racism?
Summary of Key Recommendations

• Be available. Attend to and acknowledge the social-emotional challenges of this time, within reason
• Maintain structure, predictability, consistency
• Find ways to offer some choice and control to students
• Attend to equity, inclusion, accessibility
• Take care of yourself, model self-care for students
Know Your Resources

Student Wellness
• LUC's Wellness Center
• Behavioral Concerns Team

How can I learn more?
• University COVID-19 updates
• FCIP COVID-19 support
• Academic Continuity Team
References


Coker, Tumaini R, MD, MBA; Elliott, Marc N, PhD; Kanouse, David E, PhD; Grunbaum, Jo Anne, EdD; Schwebel, David C, PhD; et al. *American Journal of Public Health*; Washington Vol. 99, Iss. 5, (May 2009): 878-84.


The Institute for Trauma, Adversity, and Resilience in Higher Education


