

Support for Implementation of Trauma-informed Practices and Strategies to Promote Resilience

Support for Trauma-informed Education in Postsecondary Systems (STEPS) Webinar Series

Provided by the Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support (ICSPS)

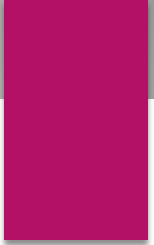
April 29, 2021





Let's check in –
anything good
happening in
these realms for
you?

Feel free to
share by
speaking or
typing!



We acknowledge that our program today is presented from the traditional land of the Peoria, traditionally Peouaroua, Peoples past and present.

We honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout generations.

We recognize and respect the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and this land.

We also call on ourselves us to continually become better stewards of the land we currently inhabit.

Feel free to shift for the purpose
of self-care, due to traumatic
triggers or otherwise.

Today's Objectives

Support

Support participants as they share out progress and challenges related to the implementation of trauma-informed practices.

Explore

Explore specific brain-based strategies to build personal resilience including strategies to use during a traumatic response

Create

Create a community of learners as a resource for future support.

Introductions

Shanna Shipman

- ▶ Twenty-year educator
- ▶ Co-founder of an alternative high school focused on restorative practices and resilience
- ▶ Most recently served state departments of education as Lead Consultant with the American Institutes for Research
- ▶ Former Social and Emotional Learning Project Lead at the Center on Great Teachers and Learners
- ▶ Began studying trauma as a refugee services provider for the United Nations and international non-profits
- ▶ Mother of four incredible and complicated kids, ages 18, 15, 11, 6

A close-up photograph of two hands shaking in a firm grip. The hand on the left is darker-skinned, and the hand on the right is lighter-skinned. The background is a dark, solid color. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

**Please say hello in the chat
and tell us, in a phrase,
why you are here.**

Start with Why:

“When we stand back and look at all the ways individuals fail to reach their full potential in our culture, trauma stands out as the most significant common factor across settings.”

Ziegler, N.D.



A trauma-informed
classroom is a more
equitable classroom.





Reality check

- ▶ Prejudice
- ▶ Poverty
- ▶ Pandemic



Let's welcome our students in...

- ▶ What are you observing, in person or remotely, that is different or concerning regarding your students' experience?

What is trauma?

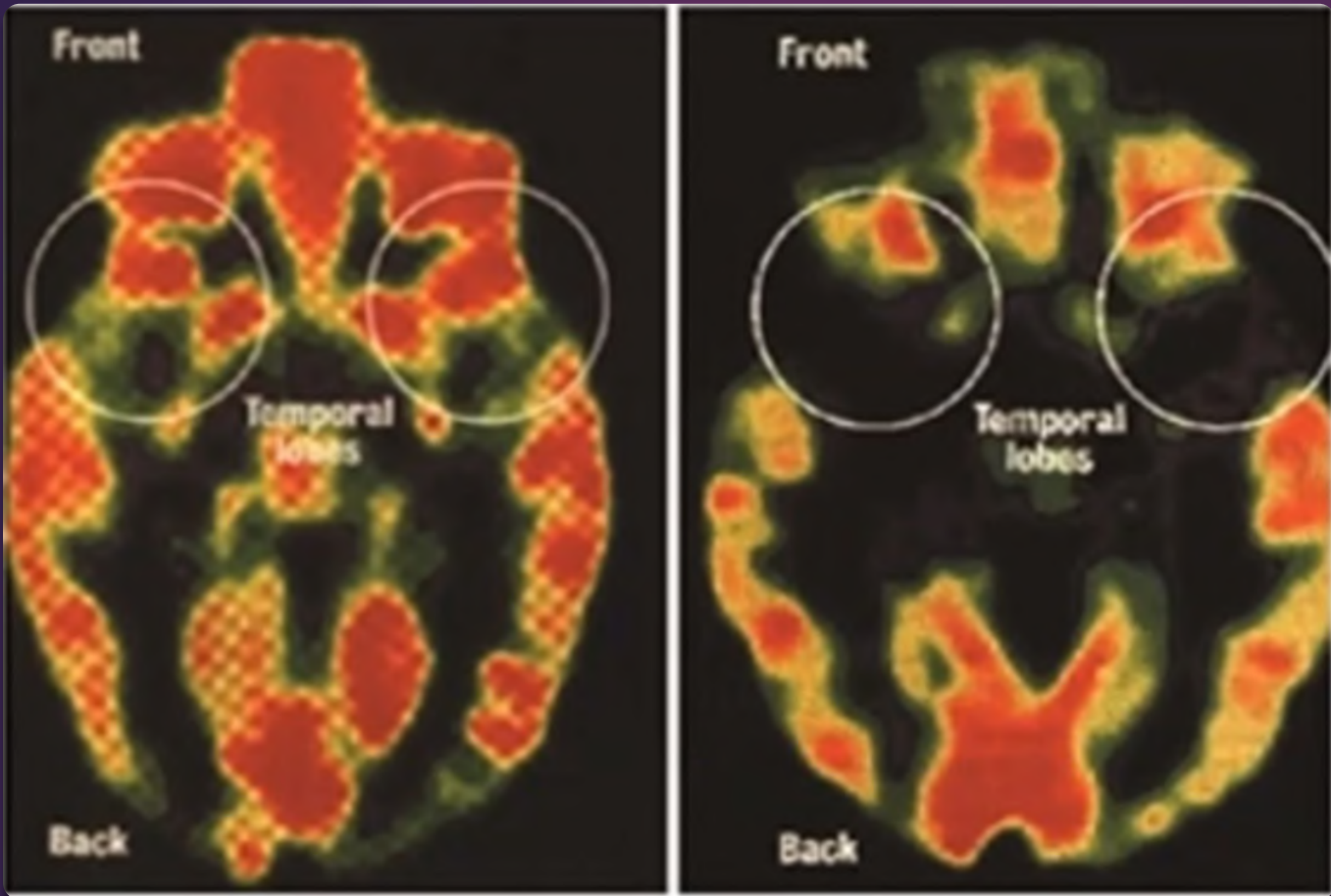
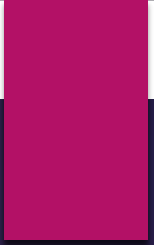
An **event**, series of events, or set of circumstances that:

- ▶ Is **experienced** by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful.
- ▶ Overwhelms a person's ability to cope.
- ▶ Has adverse **effects** on the individual's functioning and well-being.

“Big Rocks” about trauma:

- ▶ Trauma is prevalent
- ▶ Trauma is highly individual
- ▶ Trauma is cumulative
- ▶ Trauma is NOT a predictor of outcomes





Trauma is
Not a Choice

Survival Brain Hijacks the Thinking Brain

Survival Brain

- Monitors for threat
- Sounds a neurological alarm
- Activates automatic responses

Thinking Brain

- Judges, makes decisions, controls emotions
- Provides a rational “brake”
- Goes offline during threat
- Helps the body come back into balance

Traumatic Responses

- ▶ **Fight** responses: yelling, swearing, posturing, aggressive behavior
- ▶ **Flight** responses: running away, refusing to talk, avoidance, substance use
- ▶ **Freeze** responses: spacing out; appearing numb, disconnected, confused, or unresponsive
- ▶ **Fawn** responses: an urgent need to please others to avoid conflict

Trauma's Impact on Learning

- ▶ Difficulty processing information and language
- ▶ Difficulty regulating emotions, attention, and behavior
- ▶ Difficulty forming trusting relationships with others



“ Instead of asking:
Why is this person acting this way?

A trauma-informed lens moves us to:
How has this person's experiences impacted them and how they best learn? ”

MIND-SHIFT

A Trauma- Informed Approach

Realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;

Recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system;

Responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and

Seeks to actively **resist** retraumatization.

Adopting Trauma-informed Practices, Policies, and Procedures

Within the context of a **continuous improvement process**:

- ▶ Consult data.
- ▶ Consider grain-size.
- ▶ Chart a realistic course realistically.
- ▶ Create conditions for implementation.
- ▶ Carry out your plan with fidelity.
- ▶ Continuously monitor impact.
- ▶ Change course as needed.
- ▶ Choose your next priority when practice becomes *a way of being*.

Campus Level Trauma- informed Practices


- ▶ Create safety: physical, social, emotional, and intellectual.
- ▶ Communicate and prove trustworthiness.
- ▶ Allow autonomy, choice, and control.
- ▶ Collaborate meaningfully with students.
- ▶ Connect to community resources.
- ▶ Provide skill-building opportunities.
- ▶ Adapt to changing needs within a continuous improvement process.

Classroom Level Trauma- informed Practices

- ▶ Create safety: physical, social, emotional, and intellectual.
- ▶ Communicate and prove trustworthiness.
- ▶ Allow autonomy, choice, and control.
- ▶ Collaborate meaningfully with students.
- ▶ Connect to community resources.
- ▶ Provide skill-building opportunities.
- ▶ Adapt to changing needs within a continuous improvement process.

More
Classroom
Level
Trauma-
informed
Practices

- ▶ Empower students.
- ▶ Check in with students.
- ▶ Respect students' identities.
- ▶ Be predictable and preview change.
- ▶ Prepare for significant anniversaries.
- ▶ Be sensitive to family structures.
- ▶ Be aware of trauma narratives in content.
- ▶ Encourage student support systems.
- ▶ Practice de-escalation techniques.
- ▶ Express unconditional positive regard.
- ▶ Maintain high expectations.

A woman in a black dress stands at the front of a meeting room, gesturing as she presents to a group of people seated around a large white table. The room is modern with blue chairs and large screens. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**Let's be specific.
What's working in
your institution?
What's not?**

De-escalation techniques

- **Watch for signs in the other person.** These may include irrational actions, a flushed face, intense emotions, or disjointed sentences.
- **Be careful not to “mirror” the other person’s behaviors.** Remember: Mirror neurons work quickly.
- **Stay calm, move slowly, and be aware of safety.** People who are using their midbrain and not their cortex can behave erratically and dangerously. Also, the more you stay calm and connected, the easier it is for them to “mirror” you.
- **Practice empathy and give the other person space.** Listen and acknowledge their feelings—but don’t talk at them, touch them, make fast movements, crowd them, or give any complicated directions.
- **Invite them to take a nonpunitive “cool-down time.”** This works best if it is an option, not a command.
- **Suggest simple tasks to engage the cortex.** For example, ask them to remind you how their name is spelled or encourage them to breathe and count to 10.
- **Ask for help.** When the other person has begun to de-escalate, change the subject by asking them for their help (e.g., “I can tell you aren’t ready to engage in work yet, but are you calm enough to help me by ...?”)

Source: Sound Discipline, 2016.

Secondary Traumatic Stress

The emotional distress caused by hearing about the firsthand traumatic experiences of another person. May experience symptoms similar to those who experienced trauma.

Trauma-aware instructors can:



Care



Be aware



Be flexible



Refer to resources

Resilience

A positive, adaptive response to significant adversity.

Supported by protective factors including:

- ▶ Adaptable, caring, and supportive relationships
- ▶ A sense of mastery over life circumstances
- ▶ Affirming cultural and/or faith traditions
- ▶ Safe, supportive environments (schools, communities)



Brain-based Practices to Build Personal Resilience

During intense emotion:

- ▶ Self-talk
- ▶ Body scan.
- ▶ Breathe.

Brain-based Practices to Build Personal Resilience

- ▶ Name, recognize, and accept the emotion.
- ▶ Stay connected to people.
- ▶ Take care of self physically.

Brain-based Practices to Build Personal Resilience

- ▶ Practice perspective taking.
- ▶ Be kind to self.
- ▶ Healthy distraction.
- ▶ Create something.
- ▶ Practice gratitude.

A person is holding a white smartphone in their right hand. The screen of the phone shows a video call with a woman who has red hair and is wearing glasses. The background of the slide is a dark, blurred image of a person's face, with a bright pink rectangular shape in the top right corner.

Self-care resource:

1-800-662-HELP(4357)

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) provides local treatment information, support groups, community services, free publications.

Check out prior
webinars in this
series at the
ICSPS website:

Trauma in Postsecondary Settings
Trauma and the Pandemic
Trauma and Poverty
Historical Trauma

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A close-up photograph of two hands, palms up, holding a small, rectangular piece of white paper with deckled edges. The paper is held between the fingers of both hands. On the paper, the words "Thank You" are written in a black, elegant cursive script. The background is a solid, dark color, making the hands and the paper stand out. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the skin and the paper.

Thank You