



Trauma-Informed Pedagogy

Competency

Educator demonstrates an understanding of how trauma can affect student behaviors and responses within the school context and promotes students' abilities to self-monitor and maintain positive engagement in all aspects of learning and interactions.

Key Method

The educator will understand student behaviors from a trauma-informed lens and respond in a way that will help their students self-monitor and maintain positive engagement in all aspects of learning and interactions with others.

Method Components

What is Childhood Trauma?

Child trauma is recognized as a significant event or events, either witnessed or directly engaged in, that has a lasting effect on a student's ability to create and maintain positive engagement in all aspects of learning and interactions with others.

A student's history of potentially traumatic experiences can profoundly impact their behavior, emotions, and learning. Sensitivity to this reality, while recognizing the diversity of how trauma manifests, is essential for providing effective instruction and support. Potentially traumatic events are varied and dependent on many factors. Events could include:

- Psychological, physical, or sexual abuse
- Community or school violence
- Witnessing or experiencing domestic violence

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- National disasters or terrorism
- Commercial sexual exploitation
- Sudden or violent loss of a loved one
- Refugee or war experiences
- Military family-related stressors (e.g., deployment, parental loss, or injury)
- Physical or sexual assault
- Neglect
- Serious accidents or life-threatening illness

Understanding the potential impact of trauma should remain at the forefront of our minds. Awareness can guide us in developing strategies to navigate challenges and celebrate our students' resilience.

How Does Trauma Affect the Brain?

Educators recognize that a brain develops in a basic to the advanced pattern, with life-sustaining processes occurring first and more complex metacognitive abilities occurring last. One-time trauma, and ongoing traumatic events, can interrupt current development and later functioning. The degree of trauma, the frequency of the trauma, the nature of the trauma, and complex environmental factors before, during, and after the trauma can play an essential role in the manifestation of behaviors in the learning context.

Manifestations of behaviors that may appear in the classroom vary by student and every situation but might include:

- Difficulty with focusing or attention.
 - Emotional outbursts or withdrawal
 - Hypervigilance or anxiety
 - Challenges with self-regulation
 - Difficulty forming relationships
 - Academic difficulties
 - Re-enactment or themes of trauma in student play or work
- Recognizing these behaviors as potential indicators of trauma allows you to respond with patience, compassion, and assistance.

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Educators who work from a trauma-informed perspective recognize and utilize a basic understanding of brain development. Ensuring that support strategies are intentionally chosen to meet a student's needs, are directly

related to the affected brain area, and target creating new pathways for understanding and learning.

Leveled Intervention Strategies

Leveled intervention strategies, often called tiers or tiers of support, are recognized approaches to student management that allow an educator to provide differentiated support to meet student needs. Each of the three main levels should include multiple strategies:

- Level 1: All students utilize this level to keep them engaged in the learning environment. Examples could consist of whole-class “Brain Breaks” or “Body Breaks” and the availability of a safe space for all kids when needed.
- Level 2: This level is utilized by a select group of learners and is seen as additive to Level 1 intervention strategies. Examples could include additional “Brain Breaks” or self-monitoring notebooks or forms.
- Level 3: This level is utilized by individual learners and is seen as additive to Levels 1 and 2. Specific, targeted interventions are necessary at this level, but they could include individualized passes to pre-arranged safety spots within the school or individualized behavior plans.

Behavior Support Plan

A behavior support plan begins with creating relationships with learners and supporting the educator in developing a skill set that allows them to predict factors that may cause a student to be in crisis. The educator then works to limit the exposure and create intentional support strategies. Over time, this deliberate strategic practice supports the learners in developing new abilities and skill sets that reduce behaviors that interfere with or limit their ability to access the school environment. This plan is understood to be flexible and recursive as students adopt new skill sets.

As a reminder, if a student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for behavior support, the IEP must be followed. Reach out to the behavior support team faculty in your building to collaborate and work together.

Self-Monitoring

Self-monitoring occurs when students know they can take ownership of their behavior in the learning process. This understanding supports the development of the steps necessary to maintain positive engagement in all aspects of learning and interaction.

Replacement Behaviors

Replacement behaviors replace a behavior that limits a student's access to learning opportunities and encourages maintenance of the learning opportunity. Educators recognize that they cannot "stop" a student's behavior, but we support a replacement. Examples could include the transition of loud pencil tapping on a desk to wrapping the pencil in a rubber band to silence the tap and allow the student to continue the activity.

Teaching Students to Self-Advocate

Through the informal behavior plan's recursive work, students are introduced to self-advocacy. As students learn strategies to lessen their dependence on the educator and understand their responses to situations, educators can start to minimize their control over the students' behaviors that impede their access to learning opportunities.

Supporting Rationale and Research

Brené with Oprah Winfrey and Dr. Bruce D. Perry on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing | Brené Brown. (2021, May 14). Brené Brown.

<https://brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-with-oprah-winfrey-and-dr-bruce-d-perry-on-trauma-resilience-and-healing/>

Perry, B. D. (2020, December 3). The Brain Science Behind Student Trauma (Opinion). Education Week.

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/opinion-the-brain-science-behind-student-trauma/2016/12>

McLaughlin, Katie. (2020, August 3). Study: Experiencing Childhood Trauma Makes Body and Brain Age Faster. *American Psychological Association*, American Psychological Association.

www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2020/08/experiencing-childhood-trauma

Perry, B., & Hambrick, E. (2008). The neurosequential model of therapeutics. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 17(3), 39-43. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ869926>

Peeverill M, Rosen ML, Lurie LA, Sambrook KA, Sheridan MA, McLaughlin KA. (2023, February). Childhood trauma and brain structure in children and

adolescents. Dev Cogn Neuroscience.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9800267/>

Webster, Erica M. (2022, February). “The Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences on Health and Development in Young Children.” *Global Pediatric Health*, U.S. National Library of Medicine.

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8882933/.

Resources

Trauma

[A Critical Intervention For Working With Traumatized Youth | Center for Adolescent Studies](#)

[Doing Right by Kids at the Intersection of Equity, Trauma-Informed Practice, and SEL](#)

[Fast Facts: Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences |Violence Prevention|Injury Center|CDC](#)

[NCTSN Resources | The National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)

[Understanding Child Trauma - What is Childhood Trauma? | SAMHSA](#)

[Understanding Child Trauma](#)

[Unlocking the Door to Learning: Trauma-Informed Classrooms & Transformational Schools](#)

Trauma and the Brain

[Childhood Trauma and the Brain for Teachers](#)

[How Trauma is Changing Children’s Brains | NEA](#)

[Trauma and the brain - All Wales Traumatic Stress Quality Improvement Ini](#)

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[Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators](#)

[How Mindfulness and Storytelling Help Kids Heal and Learn](#)

Classroom Management

Revised on: Jul 31, 2024

Interventions

[Addressing Problematic Behaviors with Behavior Plans](#)

[Behavior Intervention Plan](#)

[Using Trauma-Informed Strategies to De-Escalate Classroom Conflict](#)

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3 and be proficient in all components in Part 2.

Part 1. Overview Sections (Provides Context)

For our purposes, trauma is recognized as a significant event or event, either witnessed or directly engaged in, that has a lasting impact on a student's ability to create and maintain positive engagement in all learning and interactions with others.

Choose Option A or Option B

Option A: (For educators who want to explore an existing student whose trauma experience impacts their learning and behavior)

Option B: (For educators who wish to explore the effects of trauma more generally)

Option A: (For educators who want to support a current student whose trauma experiences impact their learning and behavior)

Section 1 Word Count: 200 word limit

Section 2 Word Count: 500 word limit

Option A Section 1:

What background information is essential to understanding the trauma affecting your student?

Include grade level, subject area, relevant cultural information, and special considerations regarding student characteristics.

Remember not to reveal anything confidential about a student.

Option A Section 2:

Self-assessment: Answer each of the following questions

- What contributed to the student's trauma?
- Why does the student choose specific responses or behaviors in the learning environment? Consider how, from the student's perspective, the actions help them.
- What leveled strategies have been implemented to support this learner?
- Why were these strategies chosen?
- How have you involved the student in the targeted approach?

Option B: (For educators who want to explore the effects of trauma more generally)

Section 1 Word Count: 200 word limit

Section 2 Word Count: 500 word limit

Option B Section 1:

Describe your current philosophy when addressing students who have experienced trauma. How do you support these students? How did you choose strategies that align with exhibited behaviors? Remember not to reveal anything confidential about a student.

Option B Section 2:

Imagine being a teacher in your current grade level, and a new student has been enrolled in your class. You learn that the student is currently in foster care after being removed from his home. The student has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). When he arrives, and you ask him to take his seat, he erupts in a series of expletives before sitting at a different desk than the one you had indicated.

- What is your initial response?
- What strategy(ies) do you set in motion?
- Why do you choose these responses?
- How do these responses affect the other students in the classroom?
- What do you do and say to the other students in the classroom once the situation is safe?
- What plan will you implement to support this student in the future?

Passing:

The educator completes Sections 1 and 2 for either Option A or B. The answers include specific examples related to current classroom practices and understandings.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following two artifacts to demonstrate your learning.

**Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.*

For our purposes, trauma is recognized as a significant event or events, either witnessed or directly engaged in, that has a lasting impact on a student's ability to create and maintain positive engagement in all aspects of learning and interaction.

Artifact 1: Action Plan

Choose a student from Option A or another student you currently have and create an action plan to increase the student's ability to self-monitor and maintain positive engagement in all learning and interactions.

The action plan should include:

- The specific behavior that needs to be addressed
- Research that you have conducted to create a goal
- An initial goal for improvement and how that improvement will be measured
- Possible causes or underlying factors that are increasing the frequency, duration, or intensity of the behaviors that are limiting the student's ability to access the learning environment
- Steps required to achieve the action plan
- A timeline
- The personnel involved and their roles (including the student) that will influence the plan's success

After strategically creating your Action Plan, implement it for at least two weeks before proceeding to the reflection.

Artifact 2: Pamphlet or brochure

Create a pamphlet or brochure for your school colleagues that includes the following:

- A summary of how childhood trauma can affect child development (including typical behaviors and rationale regarding how and why those behaviors may have emerged).
- To assist stakeholders, a list of resources, such as school, district, and community resources, is provided, along with descriptions.
- They leveled strategy ideas (2-3 at each level) to support students who have experienced traumatic events.

This artifact is submitted as artifact 2.

Artifact 3: Feedback and Revisions

Share your creation in Artifact 2 with a peer and ask for at least 2 areas for improvement and 2 ways the product is effective. Then, revise the product.

1. Find a trusted colleague with whom to share your product.
2. Ask them to provide, in writing, 2 improvement areas to improve your product.
3. Revise your project.
4. Submit your **revised** pamphlet or brochure and the written advice from your colleague. The project should show improvement from what is submitted in Artifact 2.

Take time to reflect on how the conversation and asking for feedback from your colleague helped you learn and grow.

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	Basic	Developing
Artifact 1: Action Plan	<p>The action plan includes all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The behavior that needs to be addressed ▪ Research that has been conducted ▪ The goal ▪ Possible causes or underlying factors ▪ Steps required to achieve the action plan. ▪ A timeline ▪ The personnel involved and their roles (including the student) 	<p>The action plan is missing one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The behavior that needs to be addressed ▪ Research that has been conducted ▪ The goal ▪ Possible causes or underlying factors ▪ Steps required to achieve the action plan. ▪ A timeline ▪ The personnel involved and their roles (including the student) 	<p>The action plan is missing two or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The behavior that needs to be addressed ▪ Research that has been conducted ▪ The goal ▪ Possible causes or underlying factors ▪ Steps required to achieve the action plan. ▪ A timeline ▪ The personnel involved and their roles (including the student)

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<p>Artifact 2: Pamphlet/ Brochure</p>	<p>Summary of how child trauma can affect child development.</p> <p>A list of resources available to assist is provided, and descriptions are given.</p> <p>Leveled strategy ideas (2-3 at each level) to support each tiered approach to students who have experienced traumatic events are detailed and accurate.</p> <p>Mistakes are minor and do not affect the reader's understanding.</p>	<p>Summary of how child trauma can affect child development is present.</p> <p>A list of resources is provided but descriptions are needed.</p> <p>Leveled strategies are less than 2 per approach.</p> <p>Some mistakes interfere with the reader's understanding.</p>	<p>Summary of how child trauma can affect child development is missing.</p> <p>A list of resources is not provided.</p> <p>Leveled strategy ideas are missing, incomplete, and/or inaccurate</p> <p>Mistakes are numerous or severe enough to frequently interfere with the reader's understanding.</p>
<p>Artifact 3: Feedback and Revisions</p>	<p>The pamphlet is updated from Artifact 2, revised in 2 ways, and submitted.</p> <p>Written suggestions are provided by a colleague.</p>	<p>The pamphlet is updated from Artifact 2, revised in 2 ways, and submitted.</p> <p>There are no written suggestions provided by a colleague.</p>	<p>The pamphlet is updated from Artifact 2 but in one way or less.</p> <p>There are no written suggestions provided by a colleague.</p>

Part 3 Reflection

Suggested word count: 400-500

Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential.

Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

1. Now that you have completed this micro-credential, how has your approach to working with students with trauma changed?
2. What successes and challenges have you encountered while implementing your Action Plan?
3. What successes and challenges have you encountered while implementing your Action Plan over the last two weeks?
4. What was the most valuable part of working with your peer on artifact 3?

Passing:

The response includes evidence of learning and gives specific examples of how working on this micro-credential has impacted classroom practice and how this learning will impact future scenarios.