

Trauma-informed Teaching and Learning: Principles, Practices, and Grading in Online Courses



 **COLUMBIA** | SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Interactive Workshop
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Social Work Distance Education Conference 2021
Thursday, April 15th at 9:00-9:45 am CST/ 10:00-10:45 am EST

Your Facilitators



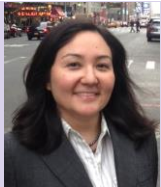
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Trauma-Informed Teaching and Learning

Overview

- Prevalence of Resilience & Trauma in Social Work Students
- Trauma-informed Approach and Trauma-informed Teaching and Learning (TITL)
- Key TITL Principles and Examples
- Application of TITL to Asynch Courses, Synch Courses, and Grading
- Application to your Teaching and Learning

The Reality: Social Work is Challenging

“It is broadly acknowledged that social work is a challenging profession. Social workers regularly witness oppression, injustice, poverty, and violence **and** provide services to persons who are traumatized, disenfranchised, and suffering” (Thomas, 2016, p. 235).

Source: Thomas, J. T. (2016). Adverse childhood experiences among MSW students. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 36(3), 235-255.

Realizing and Recognizing the Prevalence of Trauma in Social Work Students

Many individuals experience trauma during their lifetimes. Although many people exposed to trauma demonstrate few or no lingering symptoms, those who have experienced repeated, chronic, or multiple traumas are more likely to exhibit pronounced symptoms.

What does this mean for social work students?

- Although the studies are limited, research findings suggest that social workers have higher ACE prevalence than the general population samples and university students (Butler, Carello, & Maguin, 2018; Esaki & Larkin, 2013; Thomas, 2016)
- Some students may have personal histories of trauma and **may therefore experience posttraumatic stress reactions, secondary traumatic stress symptoms, or retraumatization** due to training-related triggers (Butler et al 2018; Carello, 2018; Zosky, 2013). For example: intrusive thoughts, avoidant responses, heightened reactions, anxiety, etc.

Strengths-Based: Social Workers are Resilient!

Social Work Students have a “fairly high level of resilience.” (Wilks, 2008)

- Despite high ACEs, SW students gain admission to and graduate from MSW programs (Butler, Carello, & Maguin, 2018)
- Research has found that **friend support helps** buffer academic stress and supports resilience (Wilks, 2008), along with **supportive peer relationships** (Wilks & Spivey, 2009)
- **Factors that can support resilience:** emotional intelligence, reflective ability, empathy, and social competencies/support (Grant & Kinman, 2012)
- Supporting an internal “tool-box” of coping strategies early in their career to buffer stress and burnout- mindfulness moment, checking-in on self-care, etc.

CHAT: How are we as educators building resilience and wellbeing in our social work students?

Trauma-Informed Educational Practice

- **Maxine Harris and Roger Fallot (2001) the pioneers of trauma-informed approaches.** Developed to improve clinical practice and social service delivery.
- **University of Buffalo School of Social Work, Trauma-informed and Human Rights Approach:** Dr. Lisa Butler & Dr. Janice Carello
- **To be trauma-informed in social work education:**
 - a) to understand the ways in which violence, victimization, and other forms of trauma can impact all members of the campus community, and
 - b) to use that understanding to inform policy, practices, and curricula for two main purposes:
 - 1) minimize the possibilities of (re)traumatization, and 2) maximize the possibilities of educational and professional success (adapted from Butler, Critelli, & Rinfrette, 2011; Carello & Butler, 2014, 2015; Harris & Fallot, 2001).
- **The goal of Trauma-Informed Educational Practice (TIEP) is to remove possible barriers to learning, not to remove traumatic, sensitive, or difficult material from the curriculum (Carello & Butler, 2015)**

Source: Carello, J., & Butler, L. D. (2015). Practicing what we teach: Trauma-informed educational practice. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 35(3), 262-278.

Trauma-Informed School, Program or Department

A trauma-informed school, program, or department:

- **Realizes** the likelihood that many students, educators, and staff have experienced at least one traumatic event in their lifetime
- **Recognizes** signs and symptoms of various forms of trauma (e.g. PTSD, complex trauma, vicarious trauma) and understands distinct vulnerabilities across populations and individuals within context (e.g. children, racial/ethnic minorities, immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ community members, religious minorities, veterans, people who live in poverty)
- **Respects** students, educators, and staff by supporting their resilience and learning
- **Responds** empathically, using trauma-informed principles to inform all policies and practices
- **Resists** policies and practices that are retraumatizing

(Adapted from Carello, 2018; Carello, 2016; Carello & Butler, 2015; SAMHSA, 2014)

How else does trauma show up in classes?

Trauma in postsecondary learners: What you might see

- 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

Source: Hoch et al., 2015.

Trauma-Informed Teaching & Learning (TITL) Principles

Physical, Emotional, Social, & Academic Respect	Trustworthiness & Transparency	Support & Connection	Collaboration & Mutuality	Empowerment, Voice, & Choice	Cultural, Historical, & Gender Contexts	Resilience, Growth, & Change
<p>Efforts are made to create an atmosphere that is respectful and accepting for all class members in both individual and group interactions, including opportunities to make and learn from mistakes.</p>	<p>Trust and transparency are enhanced by making course expectations clear, ensuring consistency in practice, and maintaining appropriate boundaries.</p>	<p>All class members are connected with appropriate peer and professional resources to help them succeed academically, personally, and professionally.</p>	<p>All class members act as allies rather than as adversaries to help ensure one another's success. Opportunities exist for all class members to provide input, share power, and make decisions.</p>	<p>All class members emphasize strengths and resilience over deficiencies and pathology; they empower one another to make choices and to develop confidence and competence.</p>	<p>All class members strive to be responsive to historical, cultural, and gender contexts in order to respect one another's diverse experiences and identities.</p>	<p>All class members recognize each other's strengths and resilience, and they provide feedback to help each other grow and change.</p>

Trauma-Informed Teaching: Practices & Principles

CHAT: What does this look like for you?

Download One-pager Here: <https://doi.org/10.7916/d8-gc9d-na95>

Trauma-Informed Teaching and Learning Online: Principles & Practices During a Global Health Crisis	
Physical, Emotional, Social, & Academic Respect	Acknowledge, normalize, and discuss difficult topics that are coming up in their community and in the news. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide content warnings and note the difficult crisis we are all in together• Ask students what they find to be difficult: listen and empathize• Acknowledge that feelings of being overwhelmed and helplessness (and others) may arise, note that seeing other students' feelings may be triggering for some students• Think about how to balance this time with also covering course content
Trustworthiness & Transparency	Create class routines or rituals. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create structured break times and a class agenda that is shared• Create a ritual that you do in each class, such as starting with a 15-minute class check-in discussion and ending with validations
Support & Connection	Conduct regular check-ins with students to help determine how students are doing and if adjustments or supports are needed. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let your students know that you are there for them• Check-in and follow up in with students who express concerns• Provide referral information for campus resources, such as advising, writing services, etc.

Trauma-Informed Teaching

What can this look like during a global health crisis?

Principle and Example	Further Practices
Physical, Emotional, Social and Academic Respect: Acknowledge, normalize, and discuss difficult topics that are coming up in their community and in the news.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide content warnings and note the difficult crisis we are all in together• Ask students what they found to be difficult: listen and empathize• Acknowledge that feelings of overwhelm and helplessness (and others) may arise, note that seeing other students' feelings may be triggering for some students• Think about how to balance this time with also covering course content
Trustworthiness & Transparency: Create class routines or rituals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create structured break times and a class agenda that is shared• Create a ritual that you do in each class, such as starting with a 15-minute class check-in discussion and ending with validations

Trauma-Informed Teaching - Cont.

What can this look like during a global health crisis?

Principle and Example	Further Practices
<p>Support and Connection: Conduct regular check-ins with students to help determine how students are doing and if adjustments or supports are needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let your students know that you are there for them• Check-in and follow up in with students who express concerns• Provide referral information for campus resources, such as advising, writing services, etc.
<p>Collaboration & Mutuality: Have class members provide input, share power and make decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate student-led discussions and activities• Use student feedback to inform/revise your present and future classes• Invite students to collaborate on revising policies, assignments, and grading

Trauma-Informed Teaching- Cont.

What can this look like during a global health crisis?

Principle and Example	Further Practices
<p>Empowerment, Voice, and Choice: Build in choices where possible. Remind each other that it is okay to “take a break.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop individualized quick break tools: taking a breath, stepping away for a few minutes, and helping students figure out one that works for them.• Allow students to choose their own short break times during a class
<p>Cultural, Historical, & Gender Contexts: Respect one another’s diverse experiences and identities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note that each student might be going through something different: Caregiving for others, sick themselves, without access to technology, struggling with finances, etc. Provide compassion for the range of diverse experiences and struggles.• Acknowledge that particular populations may be targeted or face racism, such as people who look Asian during COVID-19 pandemic and provide support and compassion

Trauma-Informed Teaching - Cont.

What can this look like during a global health crisis?

Principle and Example	Further Practices
Resilience, Growth, & Change: Recognize our individual and collective strength and resilience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practice compassion by conveying warmth and support in your communications with students.• Use hopeful and optimistic language, laugh when you can• Point out what was done well- in class and with assignments

Grading Strategies

- **Be predictable:** Build off of your college/university policies. Create policies that are clear and implement them consistently. Avoid surprises & disappointment. *(trustworthiness & transparency)*
- **Be flexible:** Consider strategies that reduce stress and emphasize learning, e.g. reducing the number of assignments or readings, making some assignments optional or complete/incomplete, dropping lowest scores, using self-care coupons, or general extensions. *(collaboration and mutuality)*
- **Help students prioritize:** If everything is important, nothing is important. Let students know what is most essential to read, do, remember, revise, etc. *(trustworthiness & transparency)*
- **Give formative feedback:** Strategies such as assignment scaffolding and regular check-ins help improve learning and reduce stress for students and instructors *(resilience, growth, and change)*


Grading Examples

- ★ Self-Care Coupons
- ★ Community Agreements
- ★ Late Days
- ★ “Oops” Points
- ★ Self-Evaluation

CHAT:

What grading ideas have you been using?



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Maybe it's silly but making it part of sw edu culture .
Example: each class has an assignment coupon for a 1 week extension if you practice self care . In field we let all agencies know that our students are encouraged to take 2 self care days per semester . Thoughts ?



SWCAREs @SWCARES2 · Nov 19, 2019

We all talk a lot about the importance of self care, but rarely do we discuss the systemic obstacles to work-life balance. How can we radicalize self care? Why is it important to do so?

4:47 PM · Nov 19, 2019 · Twitter for iPhone

Thanks!!!

What is one thing you are doing to take care of yourself?

Questions & Answers

Books

- ★ *Bandwidth Recovery* by Cia Verschelden
- ★ *Race, Equity, and the Learning Environment: The Global Relevance of Critical and Inclusive Pedagogies in Higher Education* by Tuitt, Haynes, & Stewart (Eds.)
- ★ *Incorporating Diversity and Inclusion Into Trauma-Informed Social Work* by Laura Quiros
- ★ *Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Education* by Alex Shevrin Venet
- ★ *What Happened to You? Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing* by Oprah Winfrey & Bruce Perry
- ★ *Trauma and Human Rights* by Butler, Critelli, & Carello (Eds.)
- ★ *Lessons from the Pandemic: Trauma-Informed Approaches to Crisis, College, Change* by Carello & Thompson (Eds.)
- ★ *Trauma-Informed Pedagogies: A Guide for Responding to Crisis and Inequality in Higher Education* by Thompson & Carello (Eds.)

Web Resources

- ★ [Trauma-Informed Teaching & Learning Blog](#)
- ★ [Recovery with Equity: A Roadmap for Higher Education after the Pandemic](#)
- ★ [Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice \(CTIPP\)](#)
- ★ [National Trauma Campaign](#)
- ★ [PACEs Connection Network](#)
- ★ [PACEs in Higher Education](#)
- ★ [Adolescent Provider Toolkit—Trauma and Resilience](#)
- ★ [Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative](#)

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