

Example actions to build a trauma-informed classroom culture

Create a welcoming and inclusive classroom environment



- Incorporate images, music, literature, and other teachings that represent diverse cultures, especially those represented in your school.
- Recognize and teach that individuals from the same race or ethnicity may have different experiences, traditions, and interests.
- Develop and implement consistent routines in order to promote physical and psychological safety.
- Establish that your classroom is a safe and brave environment.

Establish and maintain authentic relationships with students



- Recognize that withdrawal and disengagement are common for students experiencing trauma.
- Implement daily interactive journals that are non-evaluative and confidential between educator and student.
- Be respectful, honest, and authentic in your interactions with students around traumatic events.

Develop positive behavioral interventions that avoid re-traumatizing students



- Use “Start with Safety” strategies: (1) Speak with a calm voice and calm body language, (2) Respect personal space, (3) Set limits, (4) Allow wait time to display appropriate behavior, and (5) Acknowledge appropriate behavior.
- After the student is displaying safe behaviors, discuss the situation with the student.
- Foster connections for students in need.

Educate yourself and your students about racism



- Learn about the history of racism and the oppression of certain populations.
- Incorporate this history into lesson plans and discussions with students around traumatic events.
- Lean into—not away from—discussions about the connection between historical trauma, systemic racism, and community trauma.

Empower students to effect change



- Bring community leaders into the classroom to introduce students to efforts to promote change.
- Educate students on different ways to support positive change in their community.
- Assign community-oriented projects as extensions of students’ learning and classroom work.
- Ask students what ways they would like to be supported in making positive changes in their community.