

Trauma Informed Family Life Education

1. Be Understanding

- a. Students come into the classroom with various types of trauma
 - i. It is not our role as the educator to figure out what the trauma is, but it is our role to use necessary tools to meet the needs of our students
 - ii. Be aware some students may come to class with experiences of abuse
- b. Always provide students the option to pass when sharing information or answering questions out loud to the whole class
 - i. Student understanding can be monitored through individual work

2. Establish Clear and Safe Boundaries for the Unit

- a. If possible, allow students to be a part of establishing the boundaries for this unit
- b. Set and uphold clear consequences for violation of class boundaries
- c. Revisit these boundaries throughout the unit as a reminder for students

3. Identify Triggering Content

- a. The content taught in the Family Life Unit could be triggering to some students
 - i. Identifying these topics prior to teaching them and providing students with a warning before will help to create a safer classroom environment for all
- b. Contact your School Counseling Office to let them know when this instruction will take place. You may even consider inviting the school counselor into class, if their schedule allows.

4. Disclosure Statement for Triggering Content

- a. Provide a disclosure statement at the beginning of every class that contains content that could be triggering.
 - i. Ex. "Today in class, we will be talking about "(lesson topic)" It is important that we are serious as we are talking about this topic today. If at any point you feel uncomfortable during class, please let me know by "(explain your classroom procedure". If you need to take a break today, please "(explain your classroom procedure)."
- b. Be sure to include that you are a mandated reporter
- c. Also share what students can do during class if they feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed by the content
 - i. Students do not need to disclose why they feel uncomfortable or need a break, but for safety reasons they need to let you know they are leaving the classroom (virtual or physical classroom)

5. Be Inclusive and Mindful of Language

- a. Intentionally choose language and adjust language to meet the needs of the youth in your classroom.
- b. Think about ways to be inclusive of all students in your language
 - i. Ex. Instead of saying "Alright guys," say "Alright class"
- c. Utilize the preferred name and pronoun for all students

6. Monitor Student Reactions

- a. Monitor student reactions and behaviors during instruction

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- b. Contact school counselors if there is a concern about a specific student
- c. Offer breaks to students when necessary - for individual students or the whole class

7. Independent vs. Group Work

- a. Intentionally plan group work, if appropriate
 - i. In many cases, content and materials may be more appropriate for independent work