



Recognition, Relationship and Resilience

A Workshop for Trauma-Informed
Post-Secondary Education (TIPSE)



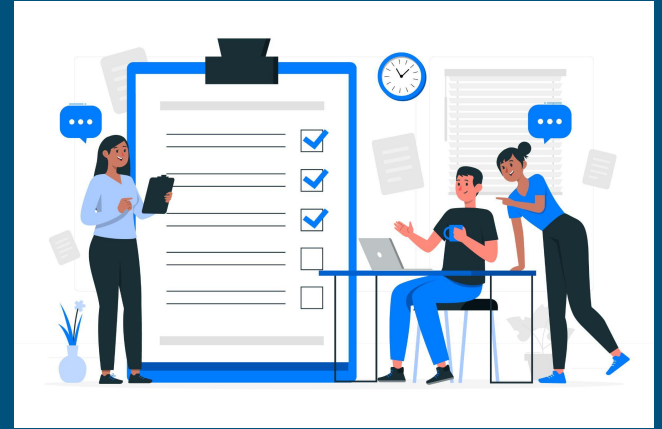
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Land Acknowledgement



Group Guidelines

- Confidentiality
- Mutual respect
- No interrupting
- Participation by choice (but encouraged)
- Differences of opinion are ok
- Take care of yourself and others



Poll #1

Who's here today?

1. Faculty
2. Staff
3. Administration
4. Educational Design
5. Other

Poll #2

How about you describe your knowledge with TIP?

1. High
2. Some
3. Low
4. None

Presentation Outline

INTRODUCTION

RECOGNITION

RELATIONSHIP

RESILIENCE

APPLICATION (Case study)



Theoretical Grounding

- Intersectionality
- Student-centred, relational teaching
- Holistic wellness
- Strength-based teaching
- Institutional and cultural change



Learning Outcomes

- Discuss various definitions and types of trauma including signs and impacts on learners.
- Consider various approaches and concepts as part of trauma-informed education including interpersonal skills, curriculum development and delivery, and institutional adaptations.
- Define resilience and other growth concepts; explore the role of self-care.
- Apply knowledge gained in this workshop to a case study scenario.

Main Takeaways: TIPSE

- TIPSE is about minimizing the chance for harming (retraumatizing) learners.
- Perspective shift for educators to see student challenges as being (possibly) adaptive responses to trauma.
- There are also practical things we can do in our course planning (assessments, language, accommodations, etc.).
- These changes are positive for all learners.
- PSIs can and should make changes at an institutional level to become more trauma-informed.

Trauma-Informed Care Guidelines

Safety



Ensuring physical and emotional safety

Common areas are welcoming and privacy is respected

Choice



Individual has choice and control

Individuals are provided a clear and appropriate message about their rights and responsibilities

Collaboration



Making decisions with the individual and sharing power

Principles in Practice

Individuals are provided a significant role in planning and evaluating services

Trustworthiness



Task clarity, consistency, and Interpersonal Boundaries

Respectful and professional boundaries are maintained

Empowerment



Prioritizing empowerment and skill building

Providing an atmosphere that allows individuals to feel validated and affirmed with each and every contact at the agency

RECOGNITION

- Definitions of trauma
- Types of trauma
- Reactions to trauma
- Impacts on learning
- Video
- Neurobiology



Trauma Defined

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

“Trauma is the lasting emotional response that often results from living through a distressing event” (CAMH, 2020, “Trauma”).

Dan Siegel

“An overwhelming experience that has potential negative impacts on an individual in the moment and in the future. Trauma often refers to an experience that is beyond the capacity for an individual to adapt effectively...” (Siegel, 2012).

Types of Trauma

- Single incident trauma
- Complex or repetitive trauma
- Developmental trauma
- Intergenerational trauma
- Historical trauma
- Vicarious trauma

Statistics

- ▶ 76% of Canadian adults report some form of trauma exposure in their lifetime (Ameringen, Mancini & Boyle, 2008).
- ▶ 9.2% of Canadians meet the criteria for PTSD (Ameringen, Mancini, Patterson, & Boyle, 2008)

**40% of
Indigenous
Canadians
report
childhood
abuse**

**48% of LGB
folks over 15
years of age
report
childhood
and/or sexual
abuse)**

**10% of kids
witness
violence by
a parent
before 15**

Social location matters

(Stats Can, 2015)

Reactions to Trauma

—

fear suicidal feelings grief
disconnection shame shock guilt
interference with school and work
disrupted relationships hypervigilance
helplessness chronic pain humiliation
self blame flashbacks depression
nightmares insomnia impaired memory
drug and alcohol abuse

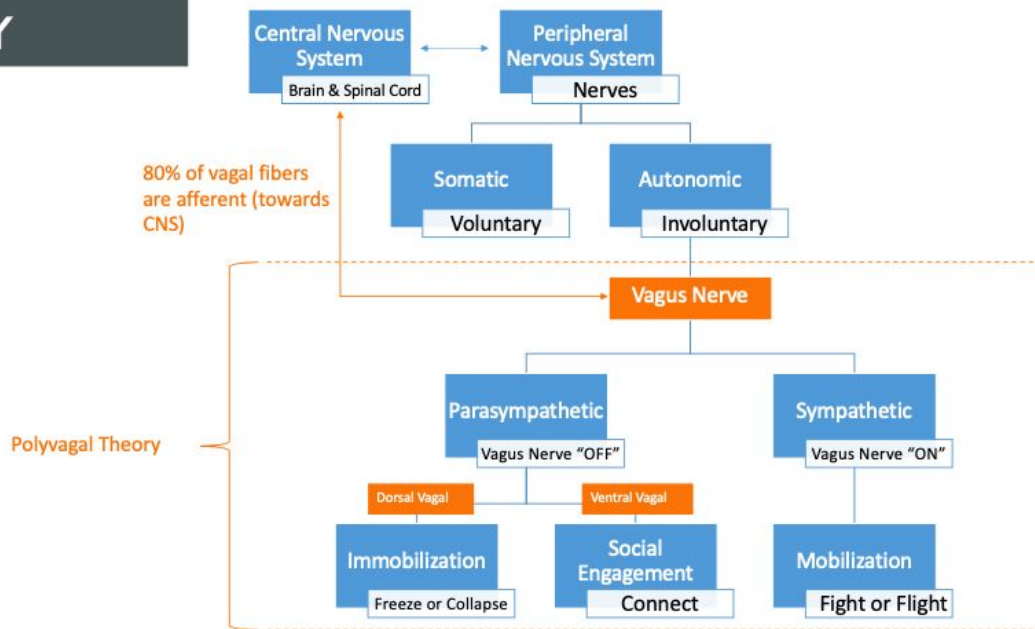
Impacts on Learning

- 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



Neurobiology

POLYVAGAL THEORY



Neurobiology

NEUROCEPTION DETECTING SAFETY AND THREAT

Safe

1st **Connect**

Social Engagement/ Communication System (Immobilization without fear)

Parasympathetic - Ventral Vagal

- Inhibits defensive limbic structures and dampens the HPA axis (slows the heart)
- Regulates facial expression, vocalization, and listening

Prosocial
Behaviours

Dangerous

2nd **Protect**

Mobilization

Sympathetic

- Fight-or-flight behaviours
- Increased metabolic activity and cardiac output

Primitive
Defensive
Behaviours

Life-threatening

3rd **Survive**

Immobilization (with fear)

Parasympathetic - Dorsal Vagal

- Freeze or collapse - behavioral shutdown (death feigning)
- Oldest mechanism of defense

(Porges, 2011)

RELATIONSHIP

**No
SIGNIFICANT
LEARNING
OCCURS
WITHOUT A
SIGNIFICANT
*relationship.***
DR. JAMES COMER

Principles of TI teaching



Relational Teaching

- Students are unique in their learning, background and identities - *avoid assumptions.*
- Consider learners with a holistic lens - *promote connection and inquiry.*
- Awareness of resources - *become comfortable discussing mental health and making referrals.*
- Maintain professional boundaries - *check in with yourself and others. Practice self-care.*

REFLECTION: *What comes up for you when considering the above suggestions? What else could be helpful for relationship building with learners?*

Curiosity and Empathy

~~“What’s wrong with you ?!”~~

~~“What happened to you?!”~~

“How are you responding?”

Curriculum Development

- Personalized and helpful messages in syllabus - *is your syllabus cruelty-free?* (Cheney, 2019)
- Strive for having an emotionally safe learning space - *include trigger / content warnings for difficult topics* .
- Class guidelines - *student generated with a focus on safety and bravery* (Arao & Clemens, 2013).
- Provide choice when possible - *diverse and multiple assessment options*.

Delivery Considerations

- **Humility & co-learning** - *dialog between equals*
- **Respect** - *pronouns, chosen names and social locations matter*
- Provide space for students to **share personal experiences** with learning materials
- **Consistency** - *be and do what you say you will*
- **Reach out** - *model caring but professional relationships*
- **Normalize and validate** students experiences and reactions to trauma
- Use **grounding techniques**

Institutional Trauma Informed Care

- Trauma-informed principals should be embedded in all institutional policies and practices.
- Reduce harm through retraumatization and put in place positive supports.
- Creates consistency in response across systems / departments.
- Increased positive outcomes for students and safer work environment for staff

Institutional Adaptations

Environmental

Policy

Accessibility

Case and cause advocacy



“What additional shifts in teaching or institutional change can you imagine being helpful?”

Institutional Adaptations

Safety - security personnel, well lit, clear directions and accessible exits.

First contacts - welcoming, respectful and engaging. Changing the names of institutions that reflection a colonial or exploitative past.

Policy - clear and well explained including rights and responsibilities of students and staff. Restorative practices over punitive.

Inclusion - students and those with lived experiences are included in planning of services and spaces.

Physical space - accessible & well marked (e.g., gender neutral washrooms), welcoming (art and colour).

Education - offer mental health and TI training for all staff

Retraumatization

- Minimize the number of times individuals need to retell a story of abuse
- It is not necessary to know the details of the traumatic event(s) to provide appropriate and positive supports
- Believe and validate people's' experiences
- Ask permission to touch and for preferred pronouns

Other considerations



- Avoid judgemental and forceful language in verbal and written communications
- Understand the connection between trauma and the broader (intersectional) conditions of an individual's life (i.e., poverty, racism etc.)

RESILIENCE

Resilience is not only the absence of post-traumatic stress after a traumatic experience, but also an individual's ability to take something positive from adversity (Boris Cyrulnik)

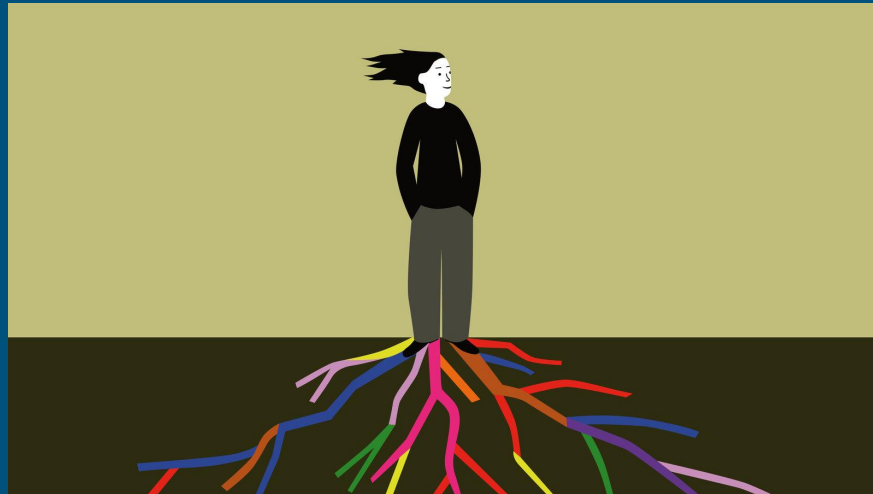


Image: NYTimes

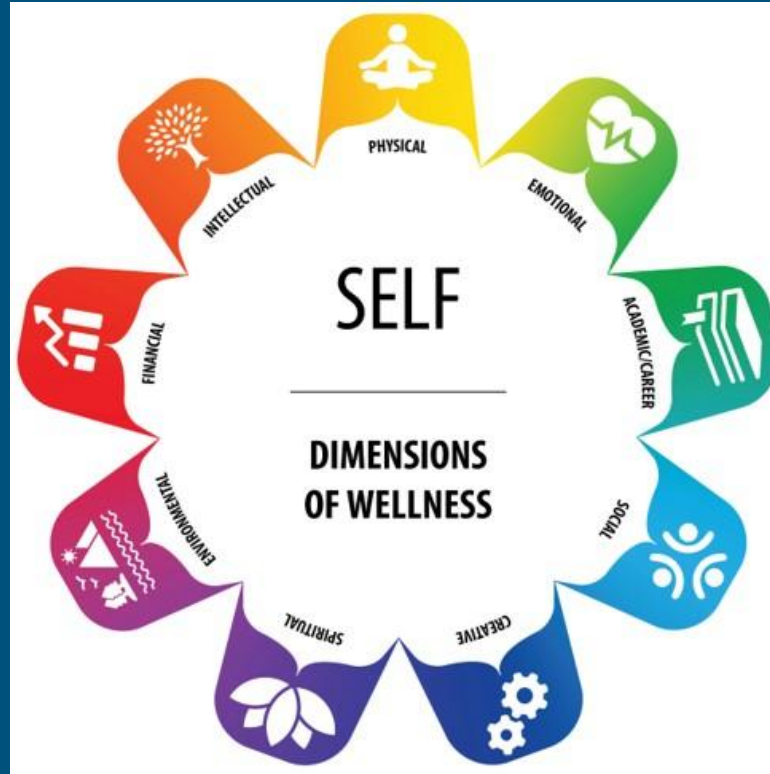
Resilience and Recovery

- Individualized - different for each person
- Social Networks - connection protects
- Social Emotional Learning - emotional regulation
- People are more than their trauma
- Consider both individual and community resilience

Growth Mindset

- Intelligence and talents are not fixed but develop through practice.
- Feedback is a source of information and helps foster improvement.
- Challenges require effort.
- Setbacks and failures are to be expected.
- Others' success is inspirational and informative.

Self-Care



Critiques

- People are more than what has happened to them
- Trauma is often collectively experienced (economically depressed environments, wars, natural disasters, etc).
- TIP can be overly individualized
- Focuses on pathology over possibility (deficit-based).

APPLICATION (Case Study)

You are planning the delivery of a potentially triggering lesson (i.e., exploring the impact of attending residential schools on indigenous artists), writers, musicians, actors, clients, learners etc.).

Discuss a trauma-informed approach to delivering this content by considering the role of:

- relational teaching;
- curriculum development and delivery;
- institutional adaptations.

Discussion



Poll #3

How about you describe your knowledge with TIP, now?

1. High
2. Some
3. Low
4. None

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