

## Trauma Informed School – Best Practice

### **Create familiar Classroom Routine** – Beginning of every class period

Assume that students do not know what to expect as they come into your classroom, students, especially traumatized students, will act out in unwanted ways if they cannot predict what will happen in your classroom. When students come to expect that your classroom is safe and predictable they will enter with ease and be ready to learn.

1. Greet students at the door as they enter your classroom
2. Review agenda and expectations for the day, everyday | Place in the same spot from day to day
3. Place essential question and/or objective for the day where students can see
4. Allow time for students to put agenda in their planners
5. Implement a 'do now/warm up' for students to complete as they come into class. This routine explicitly taught and consistent

### **Create clear, concrete and consistent classroom expectations** – Review and uphold

Should be taught similarly to any other academic subject, have a plan to teach it including student discussion and role modeling. When students are no longer following expectations they should be re-taught. These expectations are explicitly stated each day and especially when teacher expects different behavior based upon changing routines/lessons/projects in the classroom.

1. Very clear and consistent, students should be able to model
  - Ex: Eyes, Voices, Hands
  - Eyes on speaker or book, etc.
  - voices off or at level appropriate for different activities, etc.
  - hands on desk, or writing, or raised waiting to speak, etc.
2. Expectations are visible to all students and teacher can direct students to that place if not being followed

**Establish clear and safe boundaries for students who need a break** – Allow for students to take short breaks as needed in the classroom. This reinforces to the student that your classroom is a safe and welcoming place to belong. Each classroom can have a space where students can de-escalate and be ready to learn again. Breaks can be a preventive measure for teachers to use to help trauma impacted students avoid making a situation unmanageable.

1. Create clear and consistent expectations for student use of break space
  - ex. Have students use a timer and take responsibility for getting back to their seats once break is done
2. Use pillows, cushions and sensory materials for students, such as a small rubber ball they can squeeze, stuffed animals, pillows with different types of fabric, pipe cleaners, rocks, crystals, playdoh or clay, paper for scribbling, color markers/pencils, puzzles, etc.
3. Teach students to use these spaces respectfully and only when needed.
4. Breaks can be initiated by teacher or student and should NOT be used as a punitive measure. Using breaks in this way can be a valuable classroom tool for students to maintain regulation.
5. Can be used preventively

**Establish clear, safe and predictable problem solving routines** - We can create predictable, safe, and positive environments for all of our students and problems will still arise. It is important for teachers to have positive routines for when these come up.

1. When possible, catch problems early and provide a discreet prompt for student to re-engage with classroom expectations
  2. Avoid public corrections for non-safety issues as this can often trigger trauma impacted students and damage relationships
  3. Give space and time for student to regulate before attempting to problem solve
  4. When problem solving keep language focused on the problem not the student and provide strategies and solutions for making the situation better
    - ex. Allow student to take a quiet break within the classroom and then come back to work through issue
- Consider school-wide break spaces that are used: a. Preventatively (before escalation) b. Proactively (to avoid reactive or punitive responses) c. By choice and/or as part of student plan 2. Multiple uses for the space may include (thinking functionally): a. Completing work in a different location b. Self-regulation and calming when frustrated/ overwhelmed c. Temporary escape from aversive tasks d. Problem solving e. Connect with an adult