Creating Trauma-Informed Learning Environments

Workbook
Trauma-Informed Teaching Workshop Series
Syracuse University
April 2024

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Pre-Workshop Questions

To what extent (0% - 100%) do you AGREE with the following statements?

%	**Statement**
	1. I am worried that using trauma-informed approaches means coddling students, lowering standards, or acting like a therapist.
	2. I am familiar with types of symptoms experienced by traumatized individuals.
	3. I am knowledgeable about the impact trauma can have on learning.
	4. I can recognize signs of stress in students, colleagues, and myself.
	5. I am familiar with the basic principles of trauma-informed care.
	6. I understand the difference between trauma-informed care and trauma-specific services.
	7. I understand the difference between resilience, stress-related growth, and post-traumatic growth.
	8. I recognize some of the ways in which my current practices and policies are congruent with a trauma-informed approach.
	9. I am knowledgeable about strategies to reduce my own and others' stress and enhance well-being.
	10. I feel confident in my ability to apply what I've learned about trauma-informed approaches to my work.

Open-Ended Questions:

11. What are your best hopes for this workshop series?

12. How will this be helpful to you?

Post-Workshop Questions

To what extent (0% - 100%) do you AGREE with the following statements?

%   **Statement**

1. I am worried that using trauma-informed approaches means coddling students, lowering standards, or acting like a therapist.

2. I am familiar with types of symptoms experienced by traumatized individuals.

3. I am knowledgeable about the impact trauma can have on learning.

4. I can recognize signs of stress in students, colleagues, and myself.

5. I am familiar with the basic principles of trauma-informed care.

6. I understand the difference between trauma-informed care and trauma-specific services.

7. I understand the difference between resilience, stress-related growth, and post-traumatic growth.

8. I recognize some of the ways in which my current practices and policies are congruent with a trauma-informed approach.

9. I am knowledgeable about strategies to reduce my own and others' stress and enhance well-being.

10. I feel confident in my ability to apply what I've learned about trauma-informed approaches to my work.

Open-Ended Question:

1. What are one or more takeaways from this workshop series?

2. What one change would reduce stress for yourself and your students? What steps do you need to take to make this happen?

Additional Questions for Reflection

- ⚜ What does it mean to you to be trauma-informed? In what ways has your thinking about it changed or stayed the same?

- ⚜ What is one thing you are already doing that is congruent with a trauma-informed approach? How does it benefit your students, your colleagues, and yourself?

- ⚜ What questions or concerns do you have about becoming more trauma-informed individually or collectively?

- ⚜ What is one thing you might explore next to become more trauma-informed individually or collectively?

- ⚜ What support or resources would you need to become more trauma-informed individually or collectively?

Trauma-Informed Teaching and Learning Principles

Safety	Trustworthiness & Transparency	Support & Connection	Collaboration & Mutuality	Empowerment, Voice & Choice	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	Resilience, Growth & Change
Creating an environment that feels safe enough to take risks and learn from mistakes.	Making expectations clear, ensuring consistency in practice, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and minimizing disappointment.	Connecting with appropriate peer and professional resources to support academic, personal, and professional success.	Acting as allies rather than as adversaries and creating opportunities to share power and make decisions.	Building in opportunities to make choices, be heard, build skills, and develop confidence and competence.	Respecting diverse experiences, perspectives, and identities and cultivating a sense of belonging.	Recognizing strengths and resilience and providing feedback to foster growth and change.

(Developed by Janice Carello; updated March 2024; adapted from Fallot & Harris, 2009; SAMHSA, 2014)

Examples of Trauma-Informed Teaching and Learning in College Classrooms

EXAMPLES OF TRAUMA-INFORMED TEACHING AND LEARNING IN COLLEGE CLASSROOMS
Janice Carello, PhD, LMSW
https://traumainformedteaching.blog/resources/

Safety	Creating an environment that respects and accepts all individuals and helps them feel safe enough to take risks and learn from mistakes. *Examples: integrating low-stakes assignments that provide opportunity to receive feedback and learn from mistakes prior to evaluation; adopting an authoritative teaching style; modeling assertive, non-violent communication skills; providing content warnings prior to viewing or discussing sensitive material*
Trustworthiness & Transparency	Making expectations clear, ensuring consistency in practice, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and minimizing disappointment. *Examples: articulating clear policies and implementing them consistently; providing detailed assignment sheets and grading rubrics; responding promptly to email; avoiding all-or-nothing or zero-tolerance policies that are difficult to enforce consistently; creating class routines or rituals*
Support & Connection	Connecting with appropriate peer and professional resources to support academic, personal, and professional success. *Examples: providing referral information for campus and community resources such as counseling, health, and tutoring services; announcing campus and community events; facilitating peer groups and peer workshops; inviting guest speakers*
Collaboration & Mutuality	Acting as allies rather than as adversaries and creating opportunities to share power and make decisions. *Examples: weighting grades to emphasize learning objectives more than individual instructor preferences; implementing policies and practices that foster success rather than "weed out" weak students; involving students in creating or revising policies, assignments, and grading; doing with rather than doing for students (e.g., editing papers for students); facilitating student-led discussions and activities*
Empowerment, Voice, & Choice	Building in opportunities to make choices, be heard, build skills, and develop confidence and competence. *Examples: building in choices where possible (e.g., seating, lighting, readings, paper format); integrating authentic assignments and active learning; implementing realistic attendance policies; allotting late days students can use to submit work past the due date without question and without penalty; facilitating large and small group discussion so students have multiple opportunities and modes to speak*
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion	Respecting diverse experiences, perspectives, and identities and cultivating a sense of belonging. *Examples: using correct pronouns; addressing microaggressions; being aware of personal and disciplinary biases and their impact teaching and learning (e.g., privileging or disparaging certain dialects, writing styles, or research methods); integrating content from diverse sources and perspectives; employing alternative grading methods*
Resilience, Growth, & Change	Recognizing strengths and resilience and providing feedback to help each other grow and change. *Examples: providing both formative and summative assessments; pointing out what was done well; assigning multiple drafts; rewarding success rather than punishing failure; soliciting feedback from students to improve the current course; conveying optimism*

(Developed by Janice Carello; updated March 2024; adapted from Fallot & Harris, 2009; SAMHSA, 2014)

Checklist for Developing Trauma-Informed Course Assignments and Discussions

PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, SOCIAL, AND ACADEMIC SAFETY

How are assignments and discussions structured to help students feel safe, accepted, and respected, including feeling safe to make and learn from mistakes?

- ☐ Content, assignments, and activities are clearly tied to course objectives
- ☐ Student privacy is respected
- ☐ Provides opportunities to make mistakes without penalty
- ☐ Makes space for students to self-regulate without drawing attention to themselves

TRUSTWORTHINESS & TRANSPARENCY

How do you make expectations clear, ensure consistency, maintain appropriate boundaries, and minimize disappointment?

- ☐ Format/process expectations are clear (e.g. written, verbal, video explanations)
- ☐ Grading methods are clear (e.g. rubrics)
- ☐ Policies are applied consistently (e.g. late days policy vs individual extensions)
- ☐ Efforts have been made to minimize disappointment (e.g. with content, process, grade)

SUPPORT & CONNECTION

How do you connect students to appropriate resources to help them succeed academically, personally, and professionally?

- ☐ Information is provided for support services (e.g. on syllabus and on-hand when needed for individual students)
- ☐ External resources are sought and valued (i.e. instructor is not only resource or authority)
- ☐ Opportunities exist to give and receive peer feedback

COLLABORATION & MUTUALITY

How do you help students provide input, share power, and perceive you as an ally rather than an adversary?

- ☐ Student input and feedback is solicited and implemented during the semester, not just in future classes
- ☐ Students are involved in the evaluation process (e.g. self-reflection, self-evaluation, developing grading criteria)
- ☐ Emphasis is placed on helping students recognize and effectively address their own bias & errors

EMPOWERMENT, VOICE, & CHOICE

How do you empower students to make choices, advocate for themselves, and develop confidence and competence in their knowledge and skills?

- ☐ Choices are built in where possible (e.g. topic, content, presentation mode, font)
- ☐ Practice attempts are built in where possible (e.g. drafts, multiple quiz attempts, revise & resubmit opportunities)
- ☐ Multiple methods exist for communicating (e.g. 1:1, groups, verbal, written, video)
- ☐ Questions, concerns, and complaints are invited and addressed (e.g. check-ins, 1:1 conferences, online question forum)

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

How do you demonstrate respect for diverse experiences, perspectives, and identities and cultivate a sense of belonging?

- ☐ Students are addressed using accurate names and pronouns
- ☐ Content reflects diverse perspectives
- ☐ Opportunities exist to communicate using non-academic dialects and writing conventions
- ☐ Stereotypes, biases, microaggressions, and misinformation are recognized and addressed

RESILIENCE, GROWTH, & CHANGE

How do you recognize students' strengths and provide feedback that promotes growth and change?

- ☐ Emphasis is placed on learning rather than rule obedience
- ☐ Attention is paid to what was done well or is improving
- ☐ Feedback conveys that improvement is possible (e.g. "Remember to…)

Authority Styles Assessments

Box A: Authority Style Characteristics

Directive	Connective	Permissive
High expectations	High expectations	Low expectations
Clear rules, punish rule breakers	Clear standards, hold accountable	Few rules, accepting
Rigid boundaries	Flexible boundaries	Porous boundaries
Aggressive communication	Assertive communication	Passive-aggressive communication
Power over	Power with	Avoid conflict
"Because I said so"	"Let's talk about it"	"Whatever"

Box B: Trauma-Informed Teaching & Learning (TITL) Congruence

0	10
Fight, flight, freeze, appease mode	Emotionally & intellectually present
Defensive, threatened	Engaged, connected
Attending to survival	Attentive to learning & growth
Not at all congruent with TITL	Completely congruent with TITL

Box C: Trauma-Informed Teaching & Learning (TITL) Principles

Safety	Trustworthiness & Transparency	Support & Connection	Collaboration & Mutuality	Empowerment, Voice, & Choice	Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion	Resilience, Growth, & Change
Creating an environment that feels safe enough to take risks and learn from mistakes.	Making expectations clear, ensuring consistency in practice, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and minimizing disappointment.	Connecting with appropriate peer and professional resources to support academic, personal, and professional success.	Acting as allies rather than as adversaries and creating opportunities to share power and make decisions.	Building in opportunities to make choices, be heard, build skills, and develop confidence and competence.	Respecting diverse experiences, perspectives, and identities and cultivating a sense of belonging.	Recognizing strengths and resilience and providing feedback to help each other grow and change.

Part 1A: Policy & Practice Appraisal
❖ Which authority style does each example below best illustrate? (see Box A)
❖ On a scale of 0 (not at all) to 10 (completely), to what extent is each example is congruent with TITL? (see Box B)
❖ Which TITL principles, if any, are most relevant to each example? (see Box C).

Table 1: Teaching Practice Examples

	Policy or Practice Example	Authority Style	TITL Congruence	TITL Principles
1	Starting class with a mindfulness activity			
2	Providing content warnings			
3	Integrating content with high shock value			
4	Exempting a student from an assignment or policy due to current crisis or trauma history			
5	Cold calling on students during class sessions			
6	Granting students permission to record class sessions			
7	Giving an incomplete to a student who struggled all semester			
8	Requiring students to include details of their personal trauma history in a graded assignment			
9	Requiring documentation for student absences			
10	Returning work with negative feedback only			

Part 2A: Feedback Appraisal
❖ Think of examples of recent positive and critical feedback you have received from students.
❖ What might the feedback suggest about your current authority style(s)? (see Box A)
❖ What might the feedback suggest about the extent to which your students perceive your teaching style as trauma-informed? (see Box B)
❖ Which TITL principles, if any, do you think are most relevant to each example? (see Box C).
❖ Which TITL principles, if any, might you enhance more in your teaching practices?

Table 2: Student Feedback Examples

	Student Feedback	Authority Style	TITL Congruence	TITL Principles
-				
+				

Part 3A: Policy or Practice Enhancement

- ❖ Copy/paste or write out your current attendance or late work policy.
- ❖ What authority style(s) does the policy reflect? (see Box A)
- ❖ What enhancements could be made to make the policy more congruent with a trauma-informed approach? (see Boxes B & C and examples on Annotated Syllabus)

Table 3: Policy Revisions

Current Policy/Procedure	Revised Policy/Procedure

Part 1B: Policy & Practice Appraisal

❖ Which authority style does each example below best illustrate? (see Box A)
❖ On a scale of 0 (not at all) to 10 (completely), to what extent is each example is congruent with TITL? (see Box B)
❖ Which TITL principles, if any, are most relevant to each example? (see Box C).

Table 1: Practice Examples

	Policy or Practice Example	Authority Style	TITL Congruence	TITL Principles
1	Taking a long time or not responding at all to emails			
2	Exempting a student from following a policy due to a current crisis or trauma history			
3	Exempting a student/colleague from a policy due to current crisis or prior trauma history			
4	Starting meetings with a mindfulness activity			
5	Requiring students/colleagues to turn on their Zoom camera during online meetings			
6	Rigid break and lunch scheduling			
7	Expecting completion of tasks that have not been clearly assigned			
8	Seeking input about decisions from those impacted by them			
9	Giving only negative performance feedback			
10	Negotiating performance evaluations with supervisees			

Part 2B: Feedback Appraisal

❖ Think of examples of recent job-related positive and critical feedback you have received.
❖ What might the feedback suggest about your current authority style(s)? (see Box A)
❖ What might the feedback suggest about the extent to which students or colleagues perceive your authority style as trauma-informed? (see Box B)
❖ Which TITL principles, if any, do you think are most relevant to each example? (see Box C).
❖ Which TITL principles, if any, might you enhance more or advocate for in your work practices?

Table 2: Performance Feedback Examples

	Feedback	Authority Style	TITL Congruence	TITL Principles
-				
+				

Part 3B: Policy or Procedure Enhancement
- ❖ Summarize one of your office policies or procedures (e.g., lunch/break/absence coverage, out of office messages, student complaints).
- ❖ What authority style(s) does the policy or procedure reflect? (see Box A)
- ❖ What enhancements could be made to make the policy or procedures more congruent with a trauma-informed approach? (see Boxes B & C and Guide to Reviewing Existing Policies)

Table 3: Policy Revisions

Current Policy/Procedure	Revised Policy/Procedure

Developed by Janice Carello, PhD, LMSW
Updated 4/2024

Creating Trauma-Informed Learning Environments: Self-Assessment Questions for Educators

PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, SOCIAL, AND ACADEMIC SAFETY

Key Question: To what extent does the learning environment ensure physical, emotional, social, and academic safety, including feeling safe to make and learn from mistakes?

Classroom Specific Questions:
- How would you describe the physical and/or digital learning environment? Is it comfortable and inviting?
- What authority style do you model: directive, connective, or permissive?
- Do you communicate using assertive, nonviolent communication methods?
- Are you attentive to signs of student distress? Do you understand these in a trauma-informed way?
- How do you manage conflict during group discussions, activities, and assignments?
- Are students provided low stakes opportunities to make and learn from mistakes prior to being evaluated?

TRUSTWORTHINESS & TRANSPARENCY

Key Question: To what extent do learning policies and practices maximize trustworthiness and transparency by making expectations clear, ensuring consistency in practice, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and minimizing disappointment?

Classroom Specific Questions:
- Does the syllabus or learning contract provide clear information about what will be done, by whom, by when, under what circumstances, at what cost, and for what purpose?
- Are there any pulls toward less professional contacts in this setting?
- How do you handle dilemmas between role clarity and accomplishing multiple tasks (e.g., navigating working on a research project with a student or serving as both advisor and course instructor)?
- How do you communicate expectations regarding the completion, submission, and evaluation of assignments? Are expectations reasonable? Is unnecessary disappointment avoided?
- Is there any type of informed consent process? Do students have any opportunity to negotiate an alternative assignment to if they believe a specific activity or assignment would put them at risk?

SUPPORT & CONNECTION

Key Question: To what extent are students linked with appropriate peer and professional resources to help them succeed academically, personally, and professionally?

Classroom Specific Questions:
- Do you post or have on hand referral information for campus and community resources such as counseling, health, and tutoring services or providers?
- Are you available to provide support during office hours, before/after class, or through some other means?
- Do you facilitate peer activities that help students connect with their peers and provide mutual support?

COLLABORATION & MUTUALITY

Key Question: To what extent do educators and students share common goals and share power?

Classroom Specific Questions:
- Do you and your students perceive each other as allies or as adversaries?
- Is student accountability or impairment handled in a way that conveys "What's happened to the student?" versus "What's wrong with the student?"
- What role do students have in planning and evaluating their course experiences?
- Are student learning preferences and needs given substantial weight?
- Do learning experiences cultivate a model of doing "with" rather than "to" or "for" students?

EMPOWERMENT, VOICE, & CHOICE

Key Question: To what extent do policies and practices emphasize students' strengths over deficiencies and maximize experiences of choice and control?

Classroom Specific Questions:
- How much choice do student have over course content, activities, and assignments?
- Do students get clear, consistent, and appropriate messages about their rights and responsibilities?
- Do you communicate a conviction that students are the ultimate expert on their learning?
- Do you communicate that the learning environment is one over which students have little control?
- Are negative consequences for exercising particular choices necessary or arbitrary?

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

Key Question: To what extent do policies and practices integrate diverse experiences, perspectives, and identities and cultivate a sense of belonging?

Classroom Specific Questions:
- In what ways do you address stereotypes and biases in the learning environment (e.g. using correct pronouns, addressing microaggressions)? Which stereotypes and biases are addressed?
- In what ways are course content, policies, and practices responsive to and respectful of students' diverse experiences and identities (e.g. using progressive stacking during discussion, employing alternative grading methods)? To which experiences and identities are they responsive?
- To what extent are you aware of personal and disciplinary biases and how they may impact learning (e.g. privileging or disparaging particular dialects, writing styles, or research methods)?
- Are efforts made to ensure course materials and activities are accessible?

RESILIENCE, GROWTH, & CHANGE

Key Question: To what extent do policies and practices recognize and facilitate student resilience, growth, and change?

Classroom Specific Questions:
- How are each student's strengths and resilience recognized?
- Do you communicate a sense of realistic optimism about students' capacity to reach their goals?
- Do learning and feedback emphasize student growth more than student deficits?
- How are students helped to understand and reflect upon their own and others' growth and change processes?

Creating Trauma-Informed Work Environments: Questions to Facilitate Self-Assessment

PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, SOCIAL, AND ACADEMIC SAFETY

Key Question: To what extent do work settings ensure physical, emotional, social, and academic safety, including feeling safe to make and learn from mistakes?

Workplace Specific Questions:
- Is the physical environment safe (e.g. accessible exits, sufficient space, adequate privacy)?
- Do employees feel emotionally, socially, and academically safe in all individual and group settings?
- Do employees feel safe to make and learn from mistakes?
- Do employees feel comfortable bringing their work-related concerns, vulnerabilities, and emotional responses to meetings or to a supervisor or mentor?

TRUSTWORTHINESS & TRANSPARENCY

Key Question: To what extent do policies and practices maximize trustworthiness and transparency by making expectations clear, ensuring consistency in practice, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and minimizing disappointment?

Workplace Specific Questions:
- Do employees have a clear understanding of one another's work and role?
- Do employees make their expectations of one another clear? Are these expectations consistent and fair for all employees?
- Can employees count on each other to follow through with responsibilities?
- Do leaders and supervisors make rationales for policy and practice changes clear?
- Is there consistent follow through on announced plans? Are changed plans announced and explained?
- Can leaders and supervisors be trusted to listen respectfully to supervisees' concerns—even if they don't agree with some of the possible implications?

SUPPORT & CONNECTION

Key Question: To what extent are employees linked with appropriate peer and professional resources to help them succeed academically, personally, and professionally?

Workplace Specific Questions:
- Do employees have on hand referral information for campus, community, and professional resources?
- Are leaders and supervisors available to provide support during office hours or through some other means?
- Is self-care encouraged and supported with policy and practice?
- Is professional development encouraged and supported with policy and practice?

COLLABORATION & MUTUALITY

Key Question: To what extent do people in different roles share common goals and share power?

Workplace Specific Questions:
- Do employees perceive themselves as allies or as adversaries?
- Do employees understand the role that they play, the importance of this role, and the impact they have in this role?
- Is employee accountability or impairment handled in a way that conveys "What's happened to you?" rather than "What's wrong with you?"
- Are employees encouraged to provide suggestions, feedback, and ideas? Is there a formal and structured way that leaders and supervisors solicit input?
- Do work experiences cultivate a model of doing "with" rather than "to" or "for" other employees?
- Do leaders and supervisors communicate that all employees' opinions are valued even if they are not always implemented?

EMPOWERMENT, VOICE, & CHOICE

Key Question: To what extent do policies and practices emphasize employee' strengths over deficiencies and maximize experiences of choice and control?

Workplace Specific Questions:
- Is there a balance of autonomy and clear guidelines in performing job duties? Is there attention paid to ways in which employees can make choices in how they meet job requirements?
- When possible, are employees given the opportunity to have meaningful input into factors affecting their work (e.g. office décor, schedule, flex time, pedagogical/methodological approaches)?
- Are employees offered development, training, or other support opportunities to assist with work-related challenges and difficulties? To build on instructor's skills and abilities? To further their career goals?
- Do all employees receive training related to trauma, including the impact of workplace stressors?
- Do employees get a clear and appropriate message about their rights and responsibilities?
- Is there appropriate attention to accountability and shared responsibility or is there a "blame the person with the least power" approach?

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

Key Question: To what extent do policies and practices integrate diverse experiences, perspectives, and identities and cultivate a sense of belonging?

Workplace Specific Questions:
- In what ways do you address stereotypes and biases in the work environment (e.g. using correct pronouns, addressing microaggressions)? Which stereotypes and biases are addressed?
- In what ways are policies and practices responsive to and respectful of employees' diverse experiences and identities? To which experiences and identities are they responsive?
- To what extent are you aware of personal, disciplinary, or cultural biases and how they may impact the work environment (e.g. privileging or disparaging particular dialects, writing styles, or research methods)?
- Are efforts made to ensure work materials and activities are accessible?

RESILIENCE, GROWTH, & CHANGE

Key Question: To what extent do policies and practices recognize and facilitate resilience, growth, and change?

Workplace Specific Questions:
- How are each employee's strengths and resilience recognized?
- Do you communicate a sense of realistic optimism about employees' capacity to reach their goals?
- Does performance feedback emphasize growth more than deficits?
- How are employees helped to understand and reflect upon their own and others' growth and change processes?

Developed by Janice Carello, PhD, LMSW

Adapted from Fallot & Harris, 2009; SAMHSA, 2014

A version of this assessment can also be found in the free Trauma-Informed Teaching Toolbox:

Carello, J. (2022). Self-assessment tools for creating trauma-informed learning and work environments. In P. Thompson & J. Carello (Eds.), *Trauma-informed pedagogies: A guide for responding to crisis and inequality in higher education* (pp. 227-234). Palgrave Macmillan.

Professional Quality of Life Scale

PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE (PROQOL)

Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue
(ProQOL) Version 5 (2009)

When you [help] people you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you [help] can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a [helper]. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these things in the last 30 days.

1=Never	2=Rarely	3=Sometimes	4=Often	5=Very Often

_____ 1. I am happy.
_____ 2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I [help].
_____ 3. I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.
_____ 4. I feel connected to others.
_____ 5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.
_____ 6. I feel invigorated after working with those I [help].
_____ 7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a [helper].
_____ 8. I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I [help].
_____ 9. I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I [help].
_____ 10. I feel trapped by my job as a [helper].
_____ 11. Because of my [helping], I have felt "on edge" about various things.
_____ 12. I like my work as a [helper].
_____ 13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I [help].
_____ 14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have [helped].
_____ 15. I have beliefs that sustain me.
_____ 16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with [helping] techniques and protocols.
_____ 17. I am the person I always wanted to be.
_____ 18. My work makes me feel satisfied.
_____ 19. I feel worn out because of my work as a [helper].
_____ 20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I [help] and how I could help them.
_____ 21. I feel overwhelmed because my case [work] load seems endless.
_____ 22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.
_____ 23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I [help].
_____ 24. I am proud of what I can do to [help].
_____ 25. As a result of my [helping], I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.
_____ 26. I feel "bogged down" by the system.
_____ 27. I have thoughts that I am a "success" as a [helper].
_____ 28. I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.
_____ 29. I am a very caring person.
_____ 30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.

What is my score and what does it mean?

In this section, you will score your test and then you can compare your score to the interpretation below.

Scoring
1. Be certain you respond to all items.
2. Go to items 1, 4, 15, 17 and 29 and reverse your score. For example, if you scored the item 1, write a 5 beside it. We ask you to reverse these scores because we have learned that the test works better if you reverse these scores.

You Wrote	Change to
1	5
2	4
3	3
4	2
5	1

To find your score on **Compassion Satisfaction**, add your scores on questions 3, 6, 12, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 27, 30.

The sum of my Compassion Satisfaction questions was	So My Score Equals	My Level of Compassion Satisfaction
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

To find your score on **Burnout**, add your scores questions 1, 4, 8, 10, 15, 17, 19, 21, 26 and 29. Find your score on the table below.

The sum of my Burnout questions	So My Score Equals	My Level of Burnout
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

To find your score on **Secondary Traumatic Stress**, add your scores on questions 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 23, 25, 28. Find your score on the table below.

The sum of my Secondary Traumatic Stress questions	So My Score Equals	My Level of Secondary Traumatic Stress
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

YOUR SCORES ON THE PROQOL: PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCREENING

Based on your responses, your personal scores are below. If you have any concerns, you should discuss them with a physical or mental health care professional.

Compassion Satisfaction _____

Compassion satisfaction is about the pleasure you derive from being able to do your work well. For example, you may feel like it is a pleasure to help others through your work. You may feel positively about your colleagues or your ability to contribute to the work setting or even the greater good of society. Higher scores on this scale represent a greater satisfaction related to your ability to be an effective caregiver in your job.

The average score is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .88). About 25% of people score higher than 57 and about 25% of people score below 43. If you are in the higher range, you probably derive a good deal of professional satisfaction from your position. If your scores are below 40, you may either find problems with your job, or there may be some other reason—for example, you might derive your satisfaction from activities other than your job.

Burnout _____

Most people have an intuitive idea of what burnout is. From the research perspective, burnout is one of the elements of compassion fatigue. It is associated with feelings of hopelessness and difficulties in dealing with work or in doing your job effectively. These negative feelings usually have a gradual onset. They can reflect the feeling that your efforts make no difference, or they can be associated with a very high workload or a non-supportive work environment. Higher scores on this scale mean that you are at higher risk for burnout.

The average score on the burnout scale is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .75). About 25% of people score above 57 and about 25% of people score below 43. If your score is below 18, this probably reflects positive feelings about your ability to be effective in your work. If you score above 57 you may wish to think about what at work makes you feel like you are not effective in your position. Your score may reflect your mood; perhaps you were having a "bad day" or are in need of some time off. If the high score persists or if it is reflective of other worries, it may be a cause for concern.

Secondary Traumatic Stress _____

The second component of Compassion Fatigue (CF) is secondary traumatic stress (STS). It is about your work-related, secondary exposure to extremely or traumatically stressful events. Developing problems due to exposure to other's trauma is somewhat rare but does happen to many people who care for those who have experienced extremely or traumatically stressful events. For example, you may repeatedly hear stories about the traumatic things that happen to other people, commonly called Vicarious Traumatization. You may see or provide treatment to people who have experienced horrific events. If your work puts you directly in the path of danger, due to your work as a soldier or civilian working in military medicine personnel, this is not secondary exposure; your exposure is primary. However, if you are exposed to others' traumatic events as a result of your work, such as providing care to casualties or for those in a military medical rehabilitation facility, this is secondary exposure. The symptoms of STS are usually rapid in onset and associated with a particular event. They may include being afraid, having difficulty sleeping, having images of the upsetting event pop into your mind, or avoiding things that remind you of the event.

The average score on this scale is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .81). About 25% of people score below 43 and about 25% of people score above 57. If your score is above 57, you may want to take some time to think about what at work may be frightening to you or if there is some other reason for the elevated score. While higher scores do not mean that you do have a problem, they are an indication that you may want to examine how you feel about your work and your work environment. You may wish to discuss this with your supervisor, a colleague, or a health care professional.

A copy of the ProQOL can be accessed at https://proqol.org/uploads/ProQOL_5_English_Self-Score.pdf

Signs You're Too Stressed

✓ You find yourself looking for any reason to call in sick and stay in bed all day.

✓ You dread opening your email.

✓ You consider caffeine a part of a balanced diet.

✓ You think you will go insane of people don't stop chewing so loudly.

✓ You always assume the worst.

✓ You feel worse when you try to relax.

Your Personal Signs of Stress

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Write out brief answers to each of the following ten questions on a 3x5 card that you can carry with you or keep handy for when life gets extremely stressful. It might also be helpful to give a copy to one or more support people and to keep a copy of the questions on file so you can update your list every six months or so.

1. Who can I turn to for support when I'm afraid or lonely? Who comforts me, makes me feel safe, and allows me to have my feelings?

2. Who do I need to avoid? Who adds to my anxiety, overwhelms me with questions, or has a tough time listening without criticizing me or giving advice?

3. What does my body need to feel nurtured, strong, and healthy?

4. What short and long-term responsibilities or commitments can I let go to attend to my needs and well-being?

5. What unhelpful or unhealthy coping strategies or activities do I need to avoid?

6. What helpful and healthy coping strategies or activities do I need to add or do more?

7. How will I best express my feelings?

8. What object can I use to remind me to breathe, relax, and be in the moment?

9. What can I do when I need to take a break from the stress? What's my best healthy distraction?

10. What positive thing(s) can I say to myself when I'm giving myself a hard time?

—Adapted from Cheryl Richardson's (2009) *The Art of Extreme Self-Care*

Self-Care Maintenance Plan

For each area, list your current practices and identify new practices you'd like to incorporate. Also identify barriers to implementing these new practices and strategies and supports to overcome these barriers.

Physical

Work

Psychological

Other areas relevant to you

Relationships

Emotional

Spiritual

Imagining the Future

Imagine yourself at the end of this academic term: Imagine you feel good about successfully completing another semester, that you feel stronger and more confident about integrating trauma-informed principles into your policies and practices. Think about one specific policy, practice, or assignment you committed to enhancing. Now think about what steps you took to make this happen.

Action Plan

- Specific policy, practice, or assignment you commit to making more trauma-informed:

- How this change will benefit your students, your colleagues, and yourself:

- What steps you need to take to make this change:

- What resources you need to make this change:

- Who can support or collaborate with you in making this change:

- How you will feel after making this change:

The Starfish Story

One day an older person was walking along the shore and noticed a child hurriedly picking up and gently throwing things into the ocean.

Approaching the child, the older person asked, "What are you doing?"

The child looked up and replied, "Throwing starfish into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die."

The older person laughed and said, "But there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish. You can't possibly make a difference!"

After listening politely, the child picked up another starfish, threw it into the ocean, and said, "It made a difference to that one!"

--Adapted from "The Star Thrower"
by Loren C. Eiseley

Presenter: Janice Carello, PhD, LMSW

Janice Carello, PhD, LMSW (she/her) is an Associate Professor and MSW Program Director at PennWest Edinboro. She received her Ph.D. from the University at Buffalo where she also earned her MSW degree and a Certificate in Trauma Counseling. Her scholarship focuses on retraumatization in educational settings and trauma-informed approaches in higher education. She is the co-editor of *Lessons from the Pandemic: Trauma-Informed Approaches to College, Crisis, Change*, Trauma and Human Rights: Integrating Approaches to Address Human Suffering, and the forthcoming *Trauma-Informed Pedagogies: A Guide to Responding to Crisis and Inequality in Higher Education*. She also publishes trauma-informed teaching and learning resources on her blog: traumainformedteaching.blog.

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