

## Option 2: Small, Practical Tips and Reminders for Trauma-Informed Teaching

### Instructions:

Consider the following tips, reminders, and examples for trauma-informed teaching practices from Dr. Janice Carello, Assistant Professor and MSW Program Director for the Social Work department at Edinboro University. Below you will find her resources “*20 Tips and Reminders for Teaching Online during Times of Crisis*” and a link to her PDF “*Examples of Trauma-Informed Teaching and Learning in College Classrooms*”.

**Select at least 3** of her suggestions and consider the practical steps that you would like to take to integrate them into your course structure, communications, or personal teaching reflection practices.

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### 20 Tips and Reminders for Teaching Online during Times of Crisis

Janice Carello, PhD, LMSW

(Source: *Trauma-Informed Teaching & Learning: Bringing a Trauma-Informed Approach to Higher Education*, [20 Tips and Reminders for Teaching Online during times of Crisis](#))

The reminders and tips below are meant to help reduce both instructors’ and students’ stress. These strategies should also help instructors save time and reduce conflict with students. I encourage you to share your tips and reminders in the comments. Be well.

1. Keep communications brief. Students are also being inundated with information.
2. If you are not already posting weekly announcements and/or module overviews or summaries, now may be a good time to start. This can help cut down on the number of emails sent, create a routine, provide clarification, and foster a sense of connection.
3. Reassure students you are there and you care by responding within 48 hours or less to all emails and to all questions they post in “Ask the professor” types of discussion forums.
4. Make sure all due dates for the rest of the semester are clear.
5. Try to limit the number of course changes.
6. Post all changes in writing.
7. Strive to keep your courses well-organized. Students who can easily locate course materials and assignments will panic less and contact you less frequently about missing or hard-to-find items.
8. Avoid surprises. Now is not a good time to add a new requirement to a module that has already been opened or a new assignment that was not previously listed in the syllabus.
9. Consider making all remaining course modules available so students can work ahead if needed. This may also help reduce the need for incompletes.
10. Limit feedback on assignments by speaking only to the most important parts of an assignment. This will help you grade assignments in a timely manner and help students focus their learning. If everything is important, nothing is important.

11. Consider reducing or eliminating late penalties so you can encourage students to meet deadlines but avoid unfairly punishing those who are unable to do so because of circumstances beyond their control.
12. Consider reducing the workload for students and for yourself, if you are able to do so without compromising the course objectives. The quality of learning may increase if the quantity of assignments decreases.
13. Consider offering live office hours using a video conferencing platform such as Zoom or Hangouts, if you are not already doing so.
14. Provide students with a phone number at which they can leave you a message and call-back number in the event they lose access to the internet.
15. Reach out to students who start to fall behind. Call to check on students who go missing.
16. Continue to hold high expectations and convey confidence that students will meet their learning goals.
17. Remind yourself and students to not let the perfect be the enemy of the good.
18. Practice what you teach with regard to self-care.
19. Pay attention to what's working well.
20. You've got this.

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## **Examples of Trauma-Informed Teaching and Learning Classrooms**

Janice Carello, PhD, LMSW

(Source: *Trauma-Informed Teaching & Learning: Bringing a Trauma-Informed Approach to Higher Education*, [Examples of Trauma-Informed Teaching and Learning Classrooms](#))

### **Physical, Emotional, Social, & Academic Safety**

Efforts are made to create an atmosphere that is respectful of the need for safety, respect, and acceptance for all class members in both individual and group interactions, including feeling safe to make and learn from mistakes.

*For example: scaffolding or integrating low-stakes assignments that provide opportunity to receive feedback and learn from mistakes prior to evaluation; adopting an authoritative teaching style; modeling assertive, nonviolent communication skills; providing content warnings prior to viewing discussing sensitive material*

### **Trustworthiness & Transparency**

Trust and transparency are enhanced by making course expectations clear, ensuring consistency in practice, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and minimizing disappointment.

*For example: 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**

All class members are connected with appropriate peer and professional resources to help them succeed academically, personally, and professionally.

*For example: 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**

All class members act as allies rather than as adversaries to help ensure one another's success. Opportunities exist for all class members to provide input, share power, and make decisions.

*For example: weighting grades to emphasize learning objectives rather 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**

All class members emphasize strengths and resilience over deficiencies and pathology; they empower one another to make choices and to develop confidence and competence.

*For example: 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*

### **Social Justice**

All class members strive to be aware of and responsive to forms of privilege and oppression and to respect one another's diverse experiences and identities.

*For example: using correct pronouns; addressing microaggressions; being aware of personal and disciplinary biases and how they impact teaching and learning (e.g. privileging or disparaging certain dialects, writing styles, or research methods); using progressive stacking during discussion, employing alternative grading methods*

### **Resilience, Growth, & Change**

All class members recognize each other's strengths and resilience, and they provide feedback to help each other grow and change.

*For example: providing both formative and summative assessments; pointing out what was done well; assigning multiple drafts; holding one-on-one conferences; facilitating peer feedback; rewarding success rather than punishing failure; soliciting feedback from students to improve the current course; conveying optimism*

*(Principles adapted from Fallot & Harris, 2009; SAMHSA, 2014) Updated March 2020*