

Compassionate Learning Communities
Supporting a Trauma-Informed Practice

Participant Handout

CONNECTION



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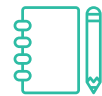
Participant Self-Care

In keeping with a trauma-informed lens, you are invited to engage with the materials at your own level, especially if you have experienced adversity. We invite you to move around, have tea, coffee or water and to leave the room if you feel triggered or overwhelmed. The sharing of personal histories is not recommended in this format and facilitators have contact information for community resources. Hopefully your school or district has school counsellors or school psychologist available to speak to today if needed.

Let's Begin

If time and resources permit, please watch the [Meet the Speakers](#) video; alternatively, you may wish to read brief introductions to the specialists who appear in the video interviews (provided at the end of this guide).

These Participant Handouts include the following components:



1. Highlights from the slide deck:
 - Student voices / scenarios
 - Compassionate Educators
 - Discussion topics and questions for reflection
2. Some of the many available resources to supplement your study and practice
3. Brief introductions for speakers included in the videos
4. Slide screenshots with space for notes



Why Trauma-Informed Practice Matters in Education

Trauma-informed practice, sometimes referred to as ACEs (Adverse Childhood Events) informed practice, is a compassionate lens of understanding that is helpful to all children, youth and adults, especially those who have experienced traumatic events and early hardships. The main components of this lens are rooted in understanding that all behaviour and actions happen for a reason and that it is up to each of us, in our helping capacity, to acknowledge current coping strategies and to assist children, youth and adults find other ways of coping, building on personal capacity and growth through supportive relationships and creative opportunities.

The lens of trauma-informed practice is relevant to all helping practitioners as it focuses on safety, stabilization and reconnection. Trauma-informed is different than the trauma-specific work that many counsellors and psychologists do, which requires specialized clinical training. In the education system, school counsellors and school psychologists may have this additional training to support children and youth with significant adversity issues, but educators and staff stay in the world of trauma-informed to ensure competence in helping.

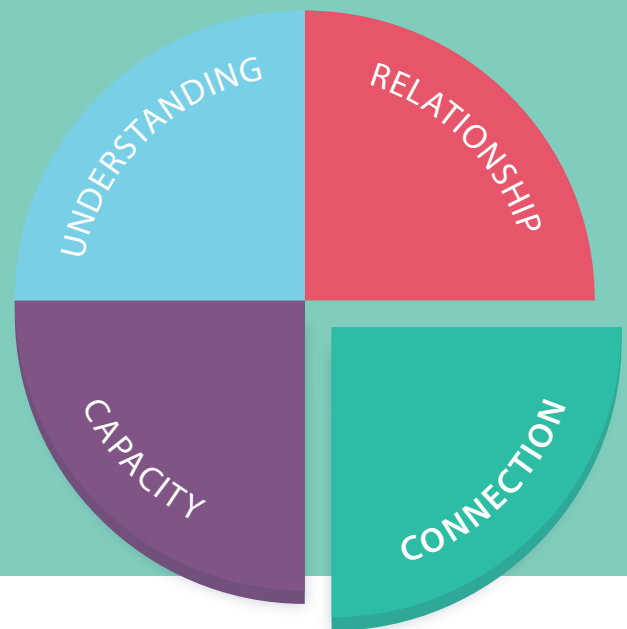
Trauma-informed practice is not intended to be a one-shot training or the latest educational fad; it involves the long-term work of transforming schools into compassionate learning communities. Trauma-informed is not about doing more in the classroom and community but rather, about doing things differently. This lens is about life and how children's environments have the potential to shape their beliefs and behaviours along the way.

Component 3

Connection

Connection is the third part of a four-part framework for creating compassionate learning communities.

- Family, community, culture
- Sharing of ideas and resources,
- Mentoring



Slide 1

Introduction (What this is, why it is important)

Thank you for joining us today for the Connection presentation on building compassionate learning environments. This presentation focuses on building from Relationships with students and families to connecting to culture, caregivers, and community. The need for Connection is another element of the Framework, with schools and educators supported in finding ways to engage with families in meaningful ways through knowledge and resource sharing.

Local resources found through community connection are required to broaden the positive experiences of students who have experienced adverse events. Educators' facilitation of community-based mentorships often brings positive, life-altering implications for students. Cultural connection through family and community involvement with schools is of critical importance in working with a trauma-informed lens, emphasizing identity and the power of healing found in various worldview. The connection between educators and districts through interactive trauma-informed resource sharing increases understanding and capacity in supporting students who have experienced adverse events.

Here are some objectives that we hope to meet in this presentation:

- Understand the power and true significance of culture in children's lives and how connection to culture may help in using a strength-based lens for children who are demonstrating Complex Trauma effects.
- Incorporating the importance of connecting to caregivers and family if at all possible to build support for child or youth and mitigate the potential negative effects from adverse childhood events.
- Understand the importance of connecting to community and collaborating with other service providers.

Slide 2 **Child and Parent: Joe's Story**



Joe is my 8 years old son and we have just moved him to a new city and school. I worked very hard to regain care of Joe although he has not lived with me since he was 5. I now live in a city, a situation that has resulted in this move for Joe. His teacher tells me that in class Joey does not speak and at every opportunity disappears out of the classroom and is usually found in the gym or outside. He loves to run and stay outside but is having a hard time making friends so plays alone much of the time. Recently two bigger boys have been bullying him. His teacher tells me that he does not engage in work and Joe says he does not know how to do what work he is given. His teacher describes him as "day-dreaming," politely oppositional, and not working to potential. I am very offended at how my son is portrayed in his IEP meeting.

For Joe, his context is critical to developing effective strategies to best support him. Joey comes from a small Indigenous northern community where he was very close to his extended family, and was recently in a kinship care agreement with his aunt and grandmother. Joe's father is second-generation residential school and has great mistrust of the education system. The two boys who have been bullying Joe have been making racist comments, the first that Joe has ever heard.



Self-Reflection

Reflect on how your staff might intervene to support Joe and his father. We will have time to revisit Joe and have time for a group discussion near the end of the presentation.

Slide 3 Youth: Jamal's Story



I am a high school counsellor and am working with Jamal who is 14 and a recent refugee. The family has moved to a northern community where a local church has sponsored the family. Jamal drifts down the halls and is always at the back of the class, hoodie tight around his face. He startles at every loud noise and often rocks himself at his desk. His English is clear, but he is struggling with reading. He does not like being in the ESL class and acts out his frustration, often yelling at anyone who tries to engage with him. His focus is on making money to go back home and he has started to sell cigarettes to other students. His art teacher is concerned as he repeatedly draws explicitly violent drawings in the class. Two other boys with youth justice involvement have gravitated to Jamal and have skipped class with him.

Jamal's context is very important in providing support for him to experience growth in a high school setting. Jamal is from war-torn Syria. He has lost many family members in the conflict including an older brother with whom he was very close. The rest of his siblings are younger and attend elementary school, so he is alone at high school. The environment is completely unfamiliar to Jamal.



Self-Reflection

Reflect on how you might collaborate to provide support to Jamal as he negotiates such a difficult transition.



Note: Larger school districts with higher numbers of English Language Learners may be able to provide services to students from refugee backgrounds (as refugee families are usually placed in larger communities with relevant resources). These districts can draw on a range of expertise including settlement workers in schools and support for multicultural workers.

▷ Slide 6 **Cultural Safety and Relevance**



Culture is how I see the world when I wake, how I breathe, it defines what is good and right and worthy, it evolves over time, it defines me.

(Tlingit Practitioner)

▷ Slide 7 **Other Ways**

[Play Video: Other Ways](#)

▷ Slide 9 **Continuum of Cultural Care and Connection (continued)**

[Play Video: Continuum of Cultural Care and Connection](#)

▷ Slide 10 **Cultural Safety in Schools**

[Play Video: Cultural Safety in Schools](#)

▷ Slide 11 **Compounding Experiences**

[Play Video: Compounding Experiences](#)

▷ Slide 13 **Culturally Safe Trauma-Informed Practice**

[Play Video: Culturally Safe Trauma Informed Practice](#)

▷ Slide 14 **Connecting to Respect and Empathy**

 [Play Video: Connecting to Respect and Empathy](#)



Wondering Questions

With colleagues, discuss where you believe your school is at on the process of establishing cultural safety for students.

- What would be required to establish cultural safety if you believe your school is not there yet?



Possibilities Discussion

- What strategies do you use to reach students if you are teaching cross-culturally?

▷ Slide 16 **Family Allies**

 [Play Video: Family Allies](#)


▷ Slide 23 **Effects of Historical Trauma (continued)**

 Click on [the link](#) to view the Umbrella of Indigenous Resiliency on Monique Grey Smith's Twitter feed

Slide 26 **It Takes Everyone**

The situation of children and youth who have experienced adversity is complex, demanding integrated, wrap-around services from service providers working in many systems including:

- Alternative Education
- Friendship Centres
- Mental Health and Addictions
- Ministry of Children and Families
- Primary Care
- Public Health
- RCMP
- Transition and Family Support Programs
- Youth Probation

 [Play Video: It Takes Everyone](#)

Slide 27 **Community Relationships**

 [Play Video: Community Relationships](#)

▷ Slide 29 **Early Intervention**



Wondering Questions

- Would you respond to Brian the same way?



Possibility Discussion

With colleagues, discuss and share proactive and preventative strategies that you have found effective in your classroom. Then discuss your wish list for preventative work the school and other agencies could provide to your students and their families.

- What supports would you like to see develop?

▷ Slide 30 **Hope in Interdisciplinary Connection**



[Play Video: Hope in Interdisciplinary Connection](#)

Slide 31 **Child**



I'm Joe's teacher and I've connected with the Aboriginal Department and Aboriginal Support Worker to meet with me and Joe's father on a regular basis. After time spent meeting with me, Joe's father has been coming into the class when he can to help at the monthly breakfast that the school started to encourage families to come to the school. The Aboriginal Support Worker has connected Joe with the local Friendship Centre that's running programs after school with youth team members acting as mentors for the younger students. I've connected Joe with extra-curricular opportunities including the running club and skating group. In the classroom, I am building on Joe's strengths with input from his dad and the Aboriginal Support Worker and working with admin to make sure Joe takes more movement breaks and "runs around the school" when he needs to. Through conversations with Joe's dad, I now have a better understanding of why Joe does what he does in the classroom.



Wondering Questions

- Would you respond to Joe and his father the same way?
- Is there anything you would do differently than you thought at the beginning?



Possibility Discussion

At your table, discuss your thoughts on current supports and barriers to intervening with Joe.

- Do you see similarities between the strategies mentioned in this outcome, and the strategies you identified for your school?

Before looking at the next slide, invite participants to share how they would initially intervene and support Jamal.

Slide 32 Youth



Jamal's teacher contacted the local multicultural society which has connected Jamal and his family with society volunteers from many different nations, including Syria. The school-based team, including a fellow counsellor and myself, decided that Jamal would benefit from more trauma-specific support as well as trauma-informed support in the school. Jamal has started working with a community counsellor who is certified to work with trauma, including both complex trauma and PTSD. Jamal's teachers have attended a workshop hosted by the school counsellors related to behaviour that may result from children's exposure to conflict and war. The Child and Youth Care Worker has been assigned to check in with Jamal each day and to provide a consistent connection between his classes.



Wondering Questions

- Would you respond to Jamal the same way?
- Is there anything you would do differently than you thought at the beginning?



Possibilities Discussion

At your table, discuss your thoughts on current supports and barriers to intervening with Jamal.



Self-Reflection

- Do you see similarities between the strategies mentioned in this outcome, and the strategies you identified for your school?



Slide 33 Youth Voice



The person that saved me at school was a child and youth care worker. I can't even believe that anyone stuck it out with me. I yelled and took off all the time. I was just so angry. I was raised by my grandma, but I was just too much for her when I hit my teens. I'm bi-racial and it was hard to fit in anywhere, better when I lived on reserve. That CYW, she never gave up, I gave up all the time, but she would not, I know she fought to keep me in school. I finished high school, like who would of thought, even though I had my daughter pretty young. I have a job, lots of training, my life is good, and my daughter's will be better than mine.

This youth shares their journey of connecting with one member of the front-line heroes in education, our dedicated support staff including aboriginal support workers, educational assistants, and child and youth care workers.

Thank you for engaging in this material. We hope it leads to productive conversations, the sharing of expertise and ideas and creative interventions over time. We hope the information helps with awareness and holding hope for your complex learners.

————— **End of slides** —————

Follow up

We suggest checking-in with staff over the following days or weeks to understand what discussions have developed out of the presentation. At this stage, staff interested in moving toward a fully trauma-informed school may want to download a working document on Developing Compassionate Learning Communities available on the website.

One page downloadable and links to other resources are included.



In a few months, the next suggested presentation is on **Capacity**, focusing on working with strengths, skills and hope and applying basic trauma-informed principles as we work towards compassionate learning communities.

One-Page Tip Sheet

Download this reference sheet for Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma.

CONNECTION
Why trauma-informed practice matters in education
As a compassionate educator I will honor ...

- Reflection as wise practice
- Respectful thoughtful inquiry with learners, families, culture, and community
- Reciprocity by acknowledging wisdom and teachings from learners / families / culture and community
- Cultural awareness, by acknowledging my worldview and core values are different from others, and this presents an opportunity to learn

Gwen Budzkin

CULTURAL SAFETY

- Trust in relationship
- Respect for the child, youth, and caregiver's beliefs and experiences
- Awareness of power differentials

Culture is how I see the world when I wake, how I breathe, it defines what is good and right and worthy, it evolves over time, it defines me.
- Tlingit Practitioner

Cultural Awareness → Cultural Sensitivity → Cultural Safety

When children are triggered, they are using their instinct and emotional brain.

RELATIONAL REPAIR

Families act as emotional systems, and best practice may be to recruit caregivers and parents to help children and youth with affect regulation and building competency. Thorough this team effort, all family members may become aware of their own needs in the family system. We cannot do this alone.

Engaging in the child's existing family system to uncover and build hope.

What community connections would your school need to make in order to support families?

Alberta Education Ministry of Education

Videos

Other Ways

Rachel Calder, MSW, RSW; Executive Director, Artemis Place Society

Continuum of Cultural Care and Connection

Dr. Jeffrey Schiffer, Seesional Instructor, Justice Institute of BC; Special Projects Officer, Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society

Cultural Safety in Schools

Brittney Bertrand, Youth Communications and Project Assistant; Métis Nation BC

Compounding Experiences

Lauren Petersen, Indigenous Educator and Fraser Valley Community Activator for Métis Nation BC's Ta Saantii Healthy Communities Project

Culturally Safe Trauma Informed Practice

Dr. Jeffrey Schiffer, Seesional Instructor, Justice Institute of BC; Special Projects Officer, Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society

Connecting to Respect and Empathy

Sonia Pieraccini, Teacher, Annieville Elementary, Delta School District

Family Allies

Dr. Jennifer Wolowic, Managing Director of the Stigma and Resilience Among Youth Centre (SARAVYC)

Injured Caregivers

Allison Pooley, MAL, B.Ed; Executive Director, The Asante Centre

It Takes Everyone

Rachel Calder, MSW, RSW; Executive Director, Artemis Place Society

Community Relationships

Suman Hothi, Registered Clinical Counsellor, BC Borstal Association

Hope in Interdisciplinary Connection

Dr. Jeffrey Schiffer, Seesional Instructor, Justice Institute of BC; Special Projects Officer, Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society

Sample Resources

Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom: Moving Forward. BC Ministry of Education, Queens Press.

Early Years Indigenous Cultural Safety Resource Guide. BC Ministry of Children and Family Development. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports>

Gray-Smith, M. (2017). Speaking our Truth. Orca Book Publishers

Residential School History and Dialogue Centre (RSHDC), UBC. <http://irshdc.ubc.ca>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. Winnipeg, MT: TRC.

These are just a few of the many resources available. We encourage you to seek out additional resources relevant to your practice, school, and community.

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Bryant-Davis, T. (2007). Healing requires recognition: The case for race-based traumatic stress. *The Counselling Psychologist*, 35(1), 135-143.

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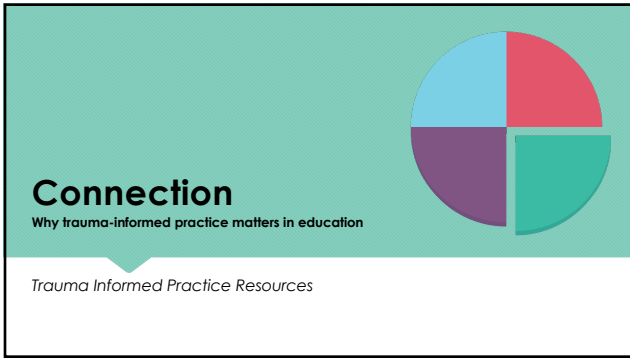
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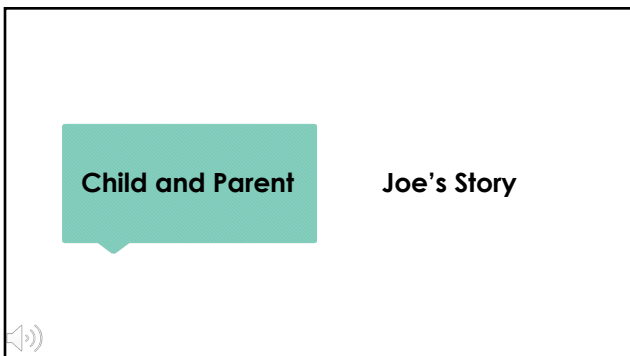
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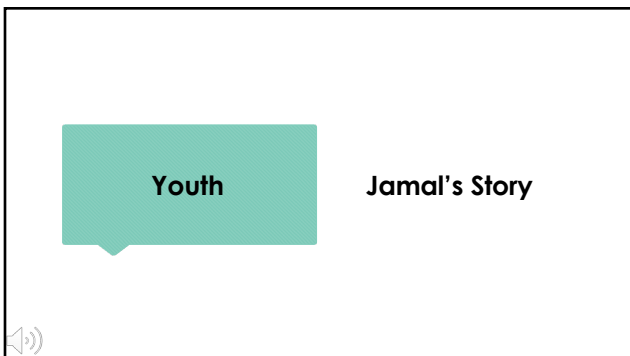
Slide Deck Notes



1



2



3

As a Compassionate Educator, I will nurture:

- Reflection
- Respectful, thoughtful inquiry
- Reciprocity
- Cultural awareness
- A growth mindset

4

As a Compassionate Educator, I will nurture:

- Identifying strengths and resilience
- Cultural Humility
- Self determination in all learners
- Cultural Sensitivity
(Gwen Budskin)

5

**Cultural Safety
and Relevance**

*How I see and
understand the
world*

6

Other Ways

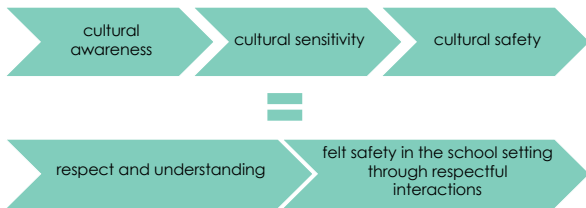


Cultural norms as a path of healing for many children, youth and families

Educating on the power and importance of culture in healing from trauma and adversity

7

Continuum of Cultural Care and Compassion



8

Continuum of Cultural Care and Connection



Feeling safe in the school setting through respectful interactions

9

Cultural Safety in Schools



Educators who understand cultural safety start with:

- trust through relationship;
- respect for the child, youth, caregivers' beliefs and experience;
- awareness of power differentials.

10

Compounding Experiences



Understanding triggers, responses and coping - to often daily, experiences of discrimination, racism, colonialism, sexism and poverty, is required.

11

Wider Phenomenon

In many situations, the impacts of adverse events and trauma on individuals, affect the family system, community, and society at large



12

Culturally Safe, Trauma-Informed Practice



Holistic, inclusive approach that supports learners, families, culture, community in a vision of self-determination.

13

Connecting to Respect and Empathy



Truth and Reconciliation, Call to Action:
63.iii Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect

14

Family Partnerships

Caregivers matter

15

Family Allies



Caregivers as allies in education

16

Family Allies


Many parents / caregivers

- have had very negative education experiences
- are mistrustful of the education system
- need help regulating their own emotions

Connecting to parents/caregivers is a way to build trust and better support children and youth.

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Injured Parents/Caregivers



Parents/caregivers may come from adversity history and without support, may also currently struggle with affect dysregulation, trust, and interpersonal skills.

18

Injured Parents/Caregivers

Linking adult trauma and child neglect/abuse:

There are a number of injured parents/caregivers who are not able to psychologically or physically be at home due to their own adverse experiences (Briere, 2005).

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Epigenetic Considerations

- Potential genetic risk from neglect or maltreatment
- Shaped through gene-by-environmental interactions
- Contributed to by poverty and on-going adverse events.

Chronic interpersonal traumatic stressors are considered environmental risks (Van der Kolk, 2001).

20

Resilient Parents/Caregivers

- Roots of resiliency: Being understood
- Basic resiliency is developed through caring, positive relationships.
- Ideologies and principles of respect: humility, sharing, healing, generosity, cooperation, patience, humour, and willingness to help others

21

Effects of Historical Trauma

Historical Trauma:

- legacy of traumatic events,
- experienced by historically oppressed communities,
- over succeeding generations;
- includes social and psychological responses.

22

Monique Gray Smith first created the Umbrella of Indigenous Resiliency in 2000 – it's a striking visual to demonstrate the historical path of resilience from the Royal Proclamation to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. A current version is in her book *Speaking our Truth*, published by Orca Book Publishers.

[View image on Monique Gray Smith's Twitter](#)
Monique Gray Smith (2017)

23

Relational Repair through Connection


Hope can be found in engaging all levels of a child's or parent's ecology of contextual systems in supportive work (Tishelman et al., 2010).

24

Community Partnerships *We cannot do this alone*

25


It Takes Everyone



Everyone working in health, education, justice, and social systems interacts with traumatic effects from adverse events.

26

Community Relationships



- Community controlled education
- Relationship building projects (Truth and Reconciliation)

27

Inter-Professional Connection of TIP

Training a Trauma-Informed Workforce:

- Schools
- Early Childhood Education
- Ministry of Children and Family Development,
- Health Authorities (Mental Health and Addictions, Acute Care)
- Youth Probation

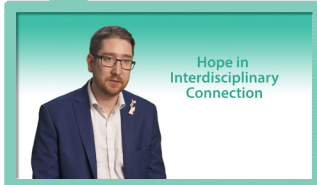
28

Early Intervention

- Support for young parents/caregivers
- Infant mental health support
- Support for children witnessing violence
- Support for parents/caregivers experiencing violence
- Support for educators and school staff

29

Hope in Interdisciplinary Connection




The education system carries a large responsibility for supporting children and youth struggling with adversity.

It needs community, interdisciplinary support and collaboration.

30

Joe's Teacher

Child



31

Jamal's School Counsellor


Youth



32

The person that saved me at school was a child and youth care worker... That CYW, she never gave up, I gave up all the time, but she would not, I know she fought to keep me in school...

Youth's Voice



33
