

Creating Trauma-Informed Classrooms

Many students have experienced stress, adversity, or trauma that can affect learning, behavior, and emotional well-being. Trauma-informed classrooms help students feel safe, supported, and ready to learn.

What Is a Trauma-Informed Classroom?

A trauma-informed classroom recognizes that students' behaviors and reactions may be connected to difficult experiences.

Trauma-informed approaches focus on:

- Safety
- Trust
- Connection
- Predictability
- Emotional support

The goal is to create an environment where all students feel respected and supported.

Signs a Student May Be Struggling

Students affected by trauma may:

- Have difficulty focusing
- Become easily overwhelmed
- React strongly to stress or changes
- Withdraw from others
- Struggle with emotional regulation
- Show changes in behavior or academic performance
- Appear anxious, angry, or disconnected

Every student responds to trauma differently.

Strategies for Trauma-Informed Classrooms

Helpful classroom practices include:

- Create consistent routines and expectations
- Build positive relationships with students
- Use calm and respectful communication
- Offer choices when possible
- Provide predictable classroom structures
- Use supportive redirection instead of shame
- Allow opportunities for breaks or self-regulation
- Recognize and praise student strengths

Small supportive actions can help students feel safer and more connected.

Avoid Re-Traumatization

Some classroom practices may unintentionally increase stress for students.

Try to avoid:

- Public shaming or embarrassment
- Yelling or harsh discipline
- Power struggles
- Unexpected changes without warning
- Dismissing student emotions

Instead of asking:

- “What’s wrong with you?”

Consider asking:

- “What may have happened to this student?”
- “How can I support them?”

Wyandot Behavioral Health Network

Website: <https://www.wyandotbhn.org/> | Phone: 913-328-4600

In Crisis? Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) or call 913-788-4200

Supporting Staff Wellness

Supporting students can be emotionally demanding.

Staff should also:

- Practice self-care
- Seek support when needed
- Use teamwork and collaboration
- Recognize signs of burnout or stress

Healthy staff are better able to support students effectively.

Remember

Trauma-informed classrooms support emotional safety, learning, and connection.
Compassion, consistency, and understanding can have a lasting impact on students.